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THE WORKS OF

CHARLES KINGSLEY

VOLUME IV

YEAST

—

POEMS

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PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH EDITION

THIS book was written nearly twelve years ago; and so many things have changed since then, that it is hardly fair to send it into the world afresh, without some notice of the improvement — if such there be — which has taken place meanwhile in those southern counties of England, with which alone this book deals.

I believe that things are improved. Twelve years more of the new poor law have taught the laboring men greater self-help and independence; I hope that those virtues may not be destroyed in them once more, by the boundless and indiscriminate almsgiving which has become the fashion of the day, in most parishes where there are resident gentry. If half the money which is now given away in different forms to the agricultural poor could be spent in making their dwellings fit for honest men to live in, then life, morals, and poor-rates would be saved to an immense amount. But as I do not see how to carry out such a plan, I have no right to complain of others for not seeing.

Meanwhile cottage improvement, and sanitary reform, throughout the country districts, are going on at a fearfully slow rate. Here and there high-hearted landlords, like the Duke of Bedford, are doing their duty like men; but in general, the apathy of the educated classes is most disgraceful.

But the laborers, during the last ten years, are altogether better off. Free trade has increased their food, without lessening their employment. The politician who wishes to know the effect on agricultural life of that wise and just measure, may find it in Mr. Grey of Dilston's answers to the queries of the French Government. The country parson will not need to seek so far. He will see it (if he be an observant man) in the faces and figures of his school-children. He will see a rosier, fatter, bigger-boned race growing up, which bids fair to surpass in bulk the puny and ill-fed generation of 1815–45, and equal, perhaps, in thew and sinew, to the men who saved Europe in the old French war.

If it should be so (as God grant it may), there is little fear but that the laboring men of England will find their aristocracy able to lead them in the battle-field, and to develop the agriculture of the land at home, even better than did their grandfathers of the old war time.

To a thoughtful man, no point of the social horizon is more full of light than the altered temper of the young gentlemen. They have their faults and follies still — for when will young blood be other than hot blood? But when one finds,

more and more, swearing banished from the hunting-field, foul songs from the universities, drunkenness and gambling from the barracks; when one finds everywhere, whether at college, in camp, or by the cover-side, more and more, young men desirous to learn their duty as Englishmen, and if possible to do it; when one hears their altered tone toward the middle classes, and that word 'snob' (thanks very much to Mr. Thackeray) used by them in its true sense, without regard of rank; when one watches, as at Aldershot, the care and kindness of officers toward their men; and over and above all this, when one finds in every profession (in that of the soldier as much as any) young men who are not only 'in the world,' but (in religious phraseology) 'of the world,' living God-fearing, virtuous, and useful lives, as Christian men should: then indeed one looks forward with hope and confidence to the day when these men shall settle down in life, and become, as holders of the land, the leaders of agricultural progress, and the guides and guardians of the laboring man.

I am bound to speak of the farmer, as I know him in the South of England. In the North he is a man of altogether higher education and breeding: but he is, even in the South, a much better man than it is the fashion to believe him. No doubt, he has given heavy cause of complaint. He was demoralized, as surely, if not as deeply, as his own laborers, by the old Poor Law. He was bewildered — to use the mildest term — by promises of Protection from men who knew better.

will develop at least into a virtue more stately and reverent, more chivalrous and self-sacrificing, more genial and human, than can be learnt from that religion of the Stock Exchange, which reigned triumphant — for a year and a day — in the popular pulpits.

I have said that Neo-Anglicanism has proved a failure, as seventeenth-century Anglicanism did. The causes of that failure this book has tried to point out: and not one word which is spoken of it therein, but has been drawn from personal and too intimate experience. But now — peace to its ashes. Is it so great a sin, to have been dazzled by the splendor of an impossible ideal? Is it so great a sin, to have had courage and conduct enough to attempt the enforcing of that ideal, in the face of the prejudices of a whole nation? And if that ideal was too narrow for the English nation, and for the modern needs of mankind, is that either so great a sin? Are other extant ideals, then, so very comprehensive? Does Mr. Spurgeon, then, take so much broader or nobler views of the capacities and destinies of his race, than that great genius, John Henry Newman? If the world cannot answer that question now, it will answer it promptly enough in another five-and-twenty years. And meanwhile let not the party and the system which has conquered boast itself too loudly. Let it take warning by the Whigs; and suspect (as many a looker-on more than suspects) that its triumph may be, as with the Whigs, its ruin; and that,

having done the work for which it was sent into the world, there may only remain for it, to decay and die.

And die it surely will, if (as seems too probable) there succeeds to this late thirty years of peace a thirty years of storm.

For it has lost all hold upon the young, the active, the daring. It has sunk into a compromise between originally opposite dogmas. It has become a religion for Jacob the smooth man; adapted to the maxims of the market, and leaving him full liberty to supplant his brother by all methods lawful in that market. No longer can it embrace and explain all known facts of God and man, in heaven and earth, and satisfy utterly such minds and hearts as those of Cromwell's Ironsides, or the Scotch Covenanters, or even of a Newton and a Colonel Gardiner. Let it make the most of its Hedley Vicars and its Havelock, and sound its own trumpet as loudly as it can, in sounding theirs; for they are the last specimens of heroism which it is likely to beget — if indeed it did in any true sense beget them, and if their gallantry was really owing to their creed, and not to the simple fact of their being — like others — English gentlemen. Well may Jacob's chaplains cackle in delighted surprise over their noble memories, like geese who have unwittingly hatched a swan!

But on Esau in general — on poor rough Esau, who sails Jacob's ships, digs Jacob's mines, founds Jacob's colonies, pours out his blood for

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS little tale was written between two and three years ago, in the hope that it might help to call the attention of wiser and better men than I am, to the questions which are now agitating the minds of the rising generation, and to the absolute necessity of solving them at once and earnestly, unless we would see the faith of our forefathers crumble away beneath the combined influence of new truths which are fancied to be incompatible with it, and new mistakes as to its real essence. That this can be done I believe and know: if I had not believed it, I would never have put pen to paper on the subject.

I believe that the ancient Creed, the Eternal Gospel, will stand, and conquer, and prove its might in this age, as it has in every other for eighteen hundred years, by claiming, and subduing, and organizing those young anarchic forces, which now, unconscious of their parentage, rebel against Him to whom they owe their being.

But for the time being, the young men and women of our day are fast parting from their

parents and each other; the more thoughtful are wandering either towards Rome, towards sheer materialism, or towards an unchristian and unphilosophic spiritualism. Epicurism which, in my eyes, is the worst evil spirit of the three, precisely because it looks at first sight most like an angel of light. The mass, again, are fancying that they are still adhering to the old creeds, the old church, to the honored patriarchs of English Protestantism. I wish I could agree with them in their belief about themselves. To me they seem — with a small sprinkling of those noble and cheering exceptions to popular error which are to be found in every age of Christ's church — to be losing most fearfully and rapidly the living spirit of Christianity, and to be, for that very reason, clinging all the more convulsively — and who can blame them? — to the outward letter of it, whether High Church or Evangelical; unconscious, all the while, that they are sinking out of real living belief, into that dead self-deceiving belief-in-believing, which has been always heretofore, and is becoming in England now, the parent of the most blind, dishonest, and pitiless bigotry.

In the following pages I have attempted to show what some at least of the young in these days are really thinking and feeling. I know well that my sketch is inadequate and partial: I have every reason to believe, from the criticisms which I have received since its first publication, that it is, as far as it goes, correct. I put it as a problem. It would be the height of arrogance in me to do

more than indicate the direction in which I think a solution may be found. I fear that my elder readers may complain that I have no right to start doubts without answering them. I can only answer, — Would that I had started them! would that I was not seeing them daily around me, under some form or other, in just the very hearts for whom one would most wish the peace and strength of a fixed and healthy faith. To the young, this book can do no harm; for it will put into their minds little but what is there already. To the elder, it may do good; for it may teach some of them, as I earnestly hope, something of the real, but too often utterly unsuspected, state of their own children's minds; something of the reasons of that calamitous estrangement between themselves and those who will succeed them, which is often too painful and oppressive to be confessed to their own hearts! Whatever amount of obloquy this book may bring upon me, I shall think that a light price to pay, if by it I shall have helped, even in a single case, to "turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come," — as come it surely will, if we persist much longer in substituting denunciation for sympathy, instruction for education, and Pharisaism for the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

1851.

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INTRODUCTION

YEAST, the name of Charles Kingsley's first novel, is one of the truest titles ever placed on the back of a book, because the great questions discussed in it, — the relation between man and woman, master and servant, rich and poor; and, above all, the relation of man to the Divine Being — are as live to-day as they were fifty years ago. Races, governments, dynasties, religions, have risen and passed away, but certain social and Divine problems of life have to be worked out to-day by the individual for himself, as they have been for centuries past; and we ourselves have the same struggles that Charles Kingsley passed through when Yeast was seething in his brain.

As will be seen in a subsequent volume of this edition — The Letters and Memories, edited by his wife — Charles Kingsley was, in 1848, the rector of a country parish in the north of Hampshire, only known to the world as the author of a strong drama, The Saint's Tragedy, which appeared early in that year; followed, in the same summer, by a serial in Frazer's Magazine, entitled Yeast.

The Saint's Tragedy had created great interest and was highly appreciated in Germany; but was

read by few, and little understood in England, where, being a distinct stand against religious asceticism, it was attacked by certain members of the High Church party, at that time all-powerful in the University of Oxford. The "young" Oxford school, however, took it up and backed it vigorously.

But Yeast was a different matter. It appeared to many persons to be a diatribe, not only against religion and the existing church parties, but against the most conservative body in England, — the great land-holding class; and that, too, at a time when France, Germany, and Ireland were in a condition of revolutionary chaos, and when England had hardly recovered breath from the unexpected failure of the much dreaded Chartist meeting on Kennington Common, April, 1848. It seemed to them to preach revolutionary doctrines of the most dangerous kinds. And the worst of all was — fume and fret as might the squires, denounce it, "Anathema and Maranatha," as might the church parties — that every one in his inmost heart knew the burning words to be true. The squire might swear, the casuist argue, but the foul facts depicted in Yeast existed, a blot on the fair name of England.

It must not be understood that all English country parishes were as bad as Whitford; but many were, — so many as probably to constitute the rule, not the exception. Charles Kingsley had known of many, and had actually lived in one for the

past five years, where the conditions were no better; and his great heart went out with yearning for his stricken people.

He recognized the power of his pen, and also that it would be useless to draw anything less than one of the strongest pictures. What such a picture might (and actually did) cost him, he clearly foresaw; but it must be done, and it was done!

As his wife writes, "Yeast was now coming out monthly in Frazer's Magazine. It was written with his heart's blood. No book ever took so much out of him. After busy days in the parish he would sit down and write it deep into the night. The state of the laboring classes in country as well as town absorbed him. Brain and nerves were continually on the stretch, and the cry of his soul was:

'How long, O Lord! how long before Thou come again!
Still in cellar, and in garret, and on moorland dreary,
The orphans moan, and widows weep, and poor men toil in vain.'"

Realizing the storm it would create, he must have been a brave man, in 1848, to publish such a ballad as the Poacher's Widow (now known as the Bad Squire) of Yeast.

. . . . . .

"You have sold the laboring man, squire,
Body and soul to shame,
To pay for your seat in the House, squire,
And to pay for the feed of your game.

received in each and every age, and allowed ourselves to be built up, generation by generation, — as the rest of Christendom might have done, — into a living temple, on the foundation which is laid already, and other than which no man can lay . . . Jesus Christ — The Man."

M. K.

YEAST

and "rode forward" as a fine young fellow of three-and-twenty who can afford it, and "has nothing else to do," has a very good right to ride.

But what is a description, without a sketch of the weather? — In these Pantheist days especially, when a hero or heroine's moral state must entirely depend on the barometer, and authors talk as if Christians were cabbages, and a man's soul as well as his lungs might be saved by sea-breezes and sunshine; or his character developed by wearing guano in his shoes, and training himself against a south wall — we must have a weather description, though, as I shall presently show, one in flat contradiction of the popular theory. Luckily for our information, Lancelot was very much given to watch both the weather and himself, and had indeed, while in his teens, combined the two in a sort of a soul-almanack on the principles just mentioned — somewhat in this style:

"*Monday*, 21*st*. — Wind S.W., bright sun, mercury at 30½ inches. Felt my heart expanded towards the universe. Organs of veneration and benevolence pleasingly excited; and gave a shilling to a tramp. An inexpressible joy bounded through every vein, and the soft air breathed purity and self-sacrifice through my soul. As I watched the beetles, those children of the sun, who, as divine Shelley says, 'laden with light and odor, pass over the gleam of the living grass,' I gained an Eden-glimpse of the pleasures of virtue.

"*N. B.* Found the tramp drunk in a ditch. I could not have degraded myself on such a day — ah! how could he?

"*Tuesday*, 22*d*. — Barometer rapidly falling.

Heavy clouds in the south-east. My heart sank into gloomy forebodings. Read 'Manfred' and doubted whether I should live long. The leaden weight of destiny seemed to crush down my aching forehead, till the thunderstorm burst, and peace was restored to my troubled soul."

This was very bad; but to do justice to Lancelot, he had grown out of it at the time when my story begins. He was now in the fifth act of his "Wertherean" stage; that sentimental measles, which all clever men must catch once in their lives, and which, generally, like the physical measles, if taken early, settles their constitution for good or evil; if taken late, goes far towards killing them. Lancelot had found Byron and Shelley pall on his taste and commenced devouring Bulwer and worshipping "Ernest Maltravers." He had left Bulwer for old ballads and romances, and Mr. Carlyle's reviews; was next alternately chivalry-mad and Germany-mad; was now reading hard at physical science; and on the whole, trying to become a great man, without any very clear notion of what a great man ought to be. Real education he never had had. Bred up at home under his father, a rich merchant, he had gone to college with a large stock of general information, and a particular mania for dried plants, fossils, butterflies, and sketching, and some such creed as this:

That he was very clever.

That he ought to make his fortune.

That a great many things were very pleasant — beautiful things among the rest.

That it was a fine thing to be "superior," gentleman-like, generous, and courageous.

That a man ought to be religious.

And left college with a good smattering of classics and mathematics, picked up in the intervals of boat-racing and hunting, and much the same creed as he brought with him, except in regard to the last article. The scenery-and-natural-history mania was now somewhat at a discount. He had discovered a new natural object, including in itself all — more than all — yet found beauties and wonders — woman!

Draw, draw the veil and weep, guardian angel! if such there be. What was to be expected? Pleasant things were pleasant — there was no doubt of that, whatever else might be doubtful. He had read Byron by stealth; he had been flogged into reading Ovid and Tibullus; and commanded by his private tutor to read Martial and Juvenal "for the improvement of his style." All conversation on the subject of love had been prudishly avoided, as usual, by his parents and teacher. The parts of the Bible which spoke of it had been always kept out of his sight. Love had been to him, practically, ground tabooed and "carnal." What was to be expected? Just what happened — if woman's beauty had nothing holy in it, why should his fondness for it? Just what happens every day — that he had to sow his wild oats for himself, and eat the fruit thereof, and the dirt thereof also.

O fathers! fathers! and you, clergymen, who monopolize education! either tell boys the truth about love, or do not put into their hands, without note or comment, the foul devil's lies about it, which make up the mass of the Latin poets — and then go, fresh from teaching Juvenal and

Ovid, to declaim at Exeter Hall against poor Peter Dens's well-meaning prurience! Had we not better take the beam out of our own eye before we meddle with the mote in the Jesuit's?

But where is my description of the weather all this time?

I cannot, I am sorry to say, give any very cheerful account of the weather that day. But what matter? Are Englishmen hedge-gnats, who only take their sport when the sun shines? Is it not, on the contrary, symbolical of our national character, that almost all our field amusements are wintry ones? Our fowling, our hunting, our punt-shooting (pastime for Hymir himself and the frost giants) — our golf and skating, — our very cricket, and boat-racing, and jack and grayling fishing, carried on till we are fairly frozen out. We are a stern people, and winter suits us. Nature then retires modestly into the background, and spares us the obtrusive glitter of summer, leaving us to think and work; and therefore it happens that in England it may be taken as a general rule, that whenever all the rest of the world is in-doors, we are out and busy, and on the whole, the worse the day, the better the deed.

The weather that day, the first day Lancelot ever saw his beloved, was truly national. A silent, dim, distanceless, steaming, rotting day in March. The last brown oak-leaf which had stood out the winter's frost, spun and quivered plump down, and then lay, as if ashamed to have broken for a moment the ghastly stillness, like an awkward guest at a great dumb dinner-party. A cold suck of wind just proved its existence, by

toothaches on the north side of all faces. The spiders having been weather-bewitched the night before, had unanimously agreed to cover every brake and brier with gossamer-cradles, and never a fly to be caught in them; like Manchester cotton-spinners madly glutting the markets in the teeth of "no demand." The steam crawled out of the dank turf, and reeked off the flanks and nostrils of the shivering horses, and clung with clammy paws to frosted hats and dripping boughs. A soulless, skyless, catarrhal day, as if that bustling dowager, old mother Earth — what with match-making in spring, and *fêtes champêtres* in summer, and dinner-giving in autumn — was fairly worn out, and put to bed with the influenza, under wet blankets and the cold-water cure.

There sat Lancelot by the cover-side, his knees aching with cold and wet, thanking his stars that he was not one of the whippers-in who were lashing about in the dripping cover, laying up for themselves, in catering for the amusement of their betters, a probable old age of bed-ridden torture, in the form of rheumatic gout. Not that he was at all happy — indeed, he had no reason to be so; for, first, the hounds would not find; next, he had left half-finished at home a review article on the Silurian System, which he had solemnly promised an abject and beseeching editor to send to post that night; next, he was on the windward side of the cover, and dare not light a cigar; and lastly, his mucous membrane in general was not in the happiest condition, seeing that he had been dining the evening before with Mr. Vaurien of Rottenpalings, a young gentleman of a convivial and melodious turn of mind,

who sang — and played also — as singing men are wont — in more senses than one, and had "ladies and gentlemen" down from town to stay with him; and they sang and played too; and so somehow between vingt-un and champagne-punch, Lancelot had not arrived at home till seven o'clock that morning, and was in a fit state to appreciate the feelings of our grandfathers, when, after the third bottle of port, they used to put the black silk tights into their pockets, slip on the leathers and boots, and ride the crop-tailed hack thirty miles on a winter's night, to meet the hounds in the next county by ten in the morning. They are "gone down to Hades, even many stalwart souls of heroes," with John Warde of Squerries at their head — the fathers of the men who conquered at Waterloo; and we their degenerate grandsons are left instead, with puny arms, and polished leather boots, and a considerable taint of hereditary diseases, to sit in club-houses, and celebrate the progress of the species.

Whether Lancelot or his horse, under these depressing circumstances, fell asleep; or whether thoughts pertaining to such a life, and its fitness for a clever and ardent young fellow in the nineteenth century, became gradually too painful, and had to be peremptorily shaken off, this deponent sayeth not; but certainly, after five-and-thirty minutes of idleness and shivering, Lancelot opened his eyes with a sudden start, and struck spurs into his hunter without due cause shown; whereat Shiver-the-timbers, who was no Griselda in temper — (Lancelot had bought him out of the Pytchley for half his value, as unridably vicious, when he had killed a

groom, and fallen backwards on a rough-rider, the first season after he came up from Horncastle) — responded by a furious kick or two, threw his head up, put his foot into a drain, and sprawled down all but on his nose, pitching Lancelot unawares shamefully on the pommel of his saddle. A certain fatality, by the by, had lately attended all Lancelot's efforts to shine; he never bought a new coat without tearing it mysteriously next day, or tried to make a joke without bursting out coughing in the middle . . . and now the whole field were looking on at his mishap; between disgust and the start he turned almost sick, and felt the blood rush into his cheeks and forehead as he heard a shout of coarse jovial laughter burst out close to him, and the old master of the hounds, Squire Lavington, roared aloud:

"A pretty sportsman you are, Mr. Smith, to fall asleep by the cover-side and let your horse down — and your pockets, too! What 's that book on the ground? Sapping and studying still? I let nobody come out with my hounds with their pocket full of learning. Hand it up here, Tom; we 'll see what it is. French, as I am no scholar! Translate for us, Colonel Bracebridge!"

And, amid shouts of laughter, the gay Guardsman read out:

"St. Francis de Sales: 'Introduction to a Devout Life.'"

Poor Lancelot! Wishing himself fathoms underground, ashamed of his book, still more ashamed of himself for his shame, he had to sit there ten physical seconds, or spiritual years, while the colonel solemnly returned him the book, complimenting him on the proofs of its purifying influ

ence which he had given the night before, in helping to throw the turnpike-gate into the river.

But "all things do end," and so did this; and the silence of the hounds also; and a faint but knowing whimper drove St. Francis out of all heads, and Lancelot began to stalk slowly with a dozen horsemen up the wood-ride, to a fitful accompaniment of wandering hound-music, where the choristers were as invisible as nightingales among the thick cover. And hark! just as the book was returned to his pocket, the sweet hubbub suddenly crashed out into one jubilant shriek, and then swept away fainter and fainter among the trees. The walk became a trot — the trot a canter. Then a faint melancholy shout at a distance, answered by a "Stole away!" from the fields; a doleful "toot!" of the horn; the dull thunder of many horse-hoofs rolling along the farther woodside. Then red coats, flashing like sparks of fire across the gray gap of mist at the ride's-mouth, then a whipper-in, bringing up a belated hound, burst into the pathway, smashing and plunging, with shut eyes, through ash-saplings and hassock-grass; then a fat farmer, sedulously pounding through the mud, was overtaken and bespattered in spite of all his struggles; — until the line streamed out into the wide rushy pasture, startling up pewits and curlews, as horsemen poured in from every side, and cunning old farmers rode off at inexplicable angles to some well-known haunts of pug: and right ahead, chiming and jangling sweet madness, the dappled pack glanced and wavered through the veil of soft gray mist.

"What's the use of this hurry?" growled Lancelot. "They will all be back again. I never have the luck to see a run."

But no; on and on — down the wind and down the vale; and the canter became a gallop, and the gallop a long straining stride; and a hundred horse-hoofs crackled like flame among the stubbles, and thundered fetlock-deep along the heavy meadows; and every fence thinned the cavalcade, till the madness began to stir all bloods, and with grim earnest silent faces, the initiated few settled themselves to their work, and with the colonel and Lancelot at their head, "took their pleasure sadly, after the manner of their nation," as old Froissart has it.

. . . . . .

> "Thorough bush, through brier,
> Thorough park, through pale;"

till the rolling grass-lands spread out into flat black open fallows, crossed with grassy baulks, and here and there a long melancholy line of tall elms, while before them the high chalk ranges gleamed above the mist like a vast wall of emerald enamelled with snow, and the winding river glittering at their feet.

"A polite fox!" observed the colonel. "He's leading the squire straight home to Whitford, just in time for dinner."

. . . . . .

They were in the last meadow, with the stream before them. A line of struggling heads in the swollen and milky current showed the hounds' opinion of Reynard's course. The sportsmen galloped off towards the nearest bridge. Brace-

bridge looked back at Lancelot, who had been keeping by his side in sulky rivalry, following him successfully through all manner of desperate places, and more and more angry with himself and the guiltless colonel, because he only followed, while the colonel's quicker and unembarrassed wit, which lived wholly in the present moment, saw long before Lancelot, "how to cut out his work," in every field.

"I sha'n't go round," quietly observed the colonel.

"Do you fancy I shall?" growled Lancelot, who took for granted — poor thin-skinned soul! that the words were meant as a hit at himself.

"You're a brace of geese," politely observed the old squire; "and you'll find it out in rheumatic fever. There — 'one fool makes many!' You'll kill Smith before you're done, colonel!" and the old man wheeled away up the meadow, as Bracebridge shouted after him:

"Oh, he'll make a fine rider — in time!"

"In time!" Lancelot could have knocked the unsuspecting colonel down for the word. It just expressed the contrast, which had fretted him ever since he began to hunt with the Whitford Priors hounds. The colonel's long practice and consummate skill in all he took in hand, — his experience of all society, from the prairie Indian to Crockford's, from the prize-ring to the continental courts, — his varied and ready store of information and anecdote, — the harmony and completeness of the man, — his consistency with his own small ideal, and his consequent apparent superiority everywhere and in everything to the huge awkward Titan-cub, who, though immeasur-

ably beyond Bracebridge in intellect and heart, was still in a state of convulsive dyspepsia, "swallowing formulæ," and daily well-nigh choked; diseased throughout with that morbid self-consciousness and lust of praise, for which God prepares, with His elect, a bitter cure. Alas! poor Lancelot! an unlicked bear, "with all his sorrows before him!" —

"Come along," quoth Bracebridge, between snatches of a tune, his coolness maddening Lancelot. "Old Lavington will find us dry clothes, a bottle of port, and a brace of charming daughters, at the Priory. In with you, little Mustang of the prairie! Neck or nothing!" —

And in an instant the small wiry American, and the huge Horncastle-bred hunter, were wallowing and staggering in the yeasty stream, till they floated into a deep reach, and swam steadily down to a low place in the bank. They crossed the stream, passed the Priory shrubberies, leapt the gate into the park, and then on and upward, called by the unseen Ariel's music before them. — Up, into the hills; past white crumbling chalk-pits, fringed with feathered juniper and tottering ashes, their floors strewed with knolls of fallen soil and vegetation, like wooded islets in a sea of milk. — Up, between steep ridges of tuft crested with black fir-woods and silver beech, and here and there a huge yew standing out alone, the advanced sentry of the forest, with its luscious fretwork of green velvet, like a mountain of Gothic spires and pinnacles, all glittering and steaming as the sun drank up the dew-drops. The lark sprang upward into song, and called merrily to the new-opened sunbeams, while the

wreaths and flakes of mist lingered reluctantly about the hollows, and clung with dewy fingers to every knoll and belt of pine. — Up into the labyrinthine bosom of the hills, — but who can describe them? Is not all nature indescribable? every leaf infinite and transcendental? How much more those mighty downs, with their enormous sheets of spotless turf, where the dizzy eye loses all standard of size and distance before the awful simplicity, the delicate vastness, of those grand curves and swells, soft as the outlines of a Greek Venus, as if the great goddess-mother Hertha had laid herself down among the hills to sleep, her Titan limbs wrapt in a thin veil of silvery green.

Up, into a vast amphitheatre of sward, whose walls banked out the narrow sky above. And here, in the focus of the huge ring, an object appeared which stirred strange melancholy in Lancelot, — a little chapel, ivy-grown, girded with a few yews, and elders, and grassy graves. A climbing rose over the porch, and iron railings round the churchyard, told of human care; and from the graveyard itself burst up one of those noble springs known as winter-bournes in the chalk ranges, which, awakened in autumn from the abysses to which it had shrunk during the summer's drought, was hurrying down upon its six months' course, a broad sheet of oily silver over a temporary channel of smooth greensward.

The hounds had checked in the woods behind; now they poured down the hillside, so close together "that you might have covered them with a sheet," straight for the little chapel.

A saddened tone of feeling spread itself through

Lancelot's heart. There were the everlasting hills around, even as they had grown and grown for countless ages, beneath the still depths of the primeval chalk ocean, in the milky youth of this great English land. And here was he, the insect of a day, fox-hunting upon *them!* He felt ashamed, and more ashamed when the inner voice whispered, "Fox-hunting is not the shame — thou art the shame. If thou art the insect of a day, it is thy sin that thou art one."

And his sadness, foolish as it may seem, grew as he watched a brown speck fleet rapidly up the opposite hill, and heard a gay view-halloo burst from the colonel at his side. The chase lost its charm for him the moment the game was seen. Then vanished that mysterious delight of pursuing an invisible object, which gives to hunting and fishing their unutterable and almost spiritual charm; which made Shakespeare a nightly poacher; Davy and Chantrey the patriarchs of fly-fishing; by which the twelve-foot rod is transfigured into an enchanter's wand, potent over the unseen wonders of the water-world, to "call up spirits from the vasty deep," which will really "come if you do call for them" — at least if the conjuration be orthodox — and they there. That spell was broken by the sight of poor wearied pug, his once gracefully-floating brush all draggled and drooping, as he toiled up the sheep-paths towards the open down above.

But Lancelot's sadness reached its crisis, as he met the hounds just outside the churchyard. Another moment — they had leaped the rails; and there they swept round under the gray wall, leaping and yelling, like Berserk fiends among

the frowning tombstones, over the cradles of the quiet dead.

Lancelot shuddered — the thing was not wrong — "it was no one's fault," — but there was a ghastly discord in it. Peace and strife, time and eternity — the mad noisy flesh, and the silent immortal spirit, — the frivolous game of life's outside show, and the terrible earnest of its inward abysses, jarred together without and within him. He pulled his horse up violently, and stood as if rooted to the place, gazing at he knew not what.

The hounds caught sight of the fox, burst into one frantic shriek of joy — and then a sudden and ghastly stillness, as, mute and breathless, they toiled up the hillside, gaining on their victim at every stride. The patter of the horse-hoofs and the rattle of rolling flints died away above. Lancelot looked up, startled at the silence; laughed aloud, he knew not why, and sat, regardless of his pawing and straining horse, still staring at the chapel and the graves.

On a sudden the chapel-door opened, and a figure timidly yet loftily stepped out without observing him, and suddenly turning round, met him full, face to face, and stood fixed with surprise as completely as Lancelot himself.

That face and figure, and the spirit which spoke through them, entered his heart at once, never again to leave it. Her features were aquiline and grand, without a shade of harshness; her eyes shone out like twain lakes of still azure, beneath a broad marble cliff of polished forehead; her rich chestnut hair rippled downward round the towering neck. With her perfect masque and

queenly figure, and earnest, upward gaze, she might have been the very model from which Raphael conceived his glorious St. Catherine — the ideal of the highest womanly genius, softened into self-forgetfulness by girlish devotion. She was simply, almost coarsely dressed; but a glance told him that she was a lady, by the courtesy of man as well as by the will of God.

They gazed one moment more at each other — but what is time to spirits? With them, as with their Father, "one day is as a thousand years." But that eye-wedlock was cut short the next instant by the decided interference of the horse, who, thoroughly disgusted at his master's whole conduct, gave a significant shake of his head, and shamming frightened (as both women and horses will do when only cross), commenced a war-dance, which drove Argemone Lavington into the porch, and gave the bewildered Lancelot an excuse for dashing madly up the hill after his companions.

"What a horrible ugly face!" said Argemone to herself, "but so clever, and so unhappy!"

Blest pity! true mother of that graceless scamp, young Love, who is ashamed of his real pedigree, and swears to this day that he is the child of Venus! — the coxcomb!

. . . . . .

[Here, for the sake of the reader, we omit, or rather postpone a long dissertation on the famous Erototheogonic chorus of Aristophanes's Birds, with illustrations taken from all earth and heaven, from the Vedas and Proclus to Jacob Behmen and Saint Theresa.]

"The dichotomy of Lancelot's personality," as

the Germans would call it, returned as he dashed on. His understanding was trying to ride, while his spirit was left behind with Argemone. Hence loose reins and a looser seat. He rolled about like a tipsy man, holding on, in fact, far more by his spurs than by his knees, to the utter infuriation of Shiver-the-timbers, who kicked and snorted over the down like one of Mephistopheles's Demon-steeds. They had mounted the hill — the deer fled before them in terror — they neared the park palings. In the road beyond them the hounds were just killing their fox, struggling and growling in fierce groups for the red gobbets of fur, a panting, steaming ring of horses round them. Half a dozen voices hailed him as he came up.

"Where have you been?" "He'll tumble off!" "He's had a fall!" "No, he has n't!" "'Ware hounds, man alive!" "He'll break his neck!"

"He has broken it, at last!" shouted the colonel, as Shiver-the-timbers rushed at the high pales, out of breath, and blind with rage. Lancelot saw and heard nothing till he was awakened from his dream by the long heave of the huge brute's shoulder, and the maddening sensation of sweeping through the air over the fence. He started, checked the curb, the horse threw up his head, fulfilling his name by driving his knees like a battering-ram against the pales — the top-bar bent like a withe, flew out into a hundred splinters, and man and horse rolled over headlong into the hard flint-road.

For one long sickening second Lancelot watched the blue sky between his own knees. Then a crash as if a shell had burst in his face — a

horrible grind — a sheet of flame — and the blackness of night. Did you ever feel it, reader?

When he awoke, he found himself lying in bed, with Squire Lavington sitting by him. There was real sorrow in the old man's face. "Come to himself!" and a great joyful oath rolled out. "The boldest rider of them all! I would n't have lost him for a dozen ready-made spick and span Colonel Bracebridges!"

"Quite right, squire!" answered a laughing voice from behind the curtain. "Smith has a clear two thousand a year, and I live by my wits!"

CHAPTER II

SPRING YEARNINGS

I HEARD a story the other day of our most earnest and genial humorist, who is just now proving himself also our most earnest and genial novelist. "I like your novel exceedingly," said a lady; "the characters are so natural — all but the baronet, and he surely is overdrawn: it is impossible to find such coarseness in his rank of life!"

The artist laughed. "And that character," said he, "is almost the only exact portrait in the whole book."

So it is. People do not see the strange things which pass them every day. "The romance of real life" is only one to the romantic spirit. And then they set up for critics, instead of pupils; as if the artist's business was not just to see what they cannot see — to open their eyes to the harmonies and the discords, the miracles and the absurdities, which seem to them one uniform gray fog of commonplaces.

Then let the reader believe, that whatsoever is commonplace in my story is my own invention. Whatsoever may seem extravagant or startling is most likely to be historic fact, else I should not have dared to write it down, finding God's actual dealings here much too wonderful to dare to invent many fresh ones for myself.

Lancelot, who had had a severe concussion of the brain and a broken leg, kept his bed for a few weeks, and his room for a few more. Colonel Bracebridge installed himself at the Priory, and nursed him with indefatigable good-humor and few thanks. He brought Lancelot his breakfast before hunting, described the run to him when he returned, read him to sleep, told him stories of grizzly bear and buffalo hunts, made him laugh in spite of himself at extempore comic medleys, kept his tables covered with flowers from the conservatory, warmed his chocolate and even his bed. Nothing came amiss to him, and he to nothing. Lancelot longed at first every hour to be rid of him, and eyed him about the room as a bulldog does the monkey who rides him. In his dreams he was Sinbad the Sailor, and Bracebridge the Old Man of the Sea; but he could not hold out against the colonel's merry bustling kindliness, and the almost womanish tenderness of his nursing. The ice thawed rapidly; and one evening it split up altogether, when Bracebridge, who was sitting drawing by Lancelot's sofa, instead of amusing himself with the ladies below, suddenly threw his pencil into the fire, and broke out, *à propos de rien*:

"What a strange pair we are, Smith! I think you just the best fellow I ever met, and you hate me like poison — you can't deny it."

There was something in the colonel's tone so utterly different from his usual courtly and measured speech, that Lancelot was taken completely by surprise, and stammered out:

"I — I — I — no — no. I know I am very foolish — ungrateful. But I do hate you," he said, with a sudden impulse, "and I'll tell you why."

"Give me your hand," quoth the colonel: "I like that. Now we shall see our way with each other, at least."

"Because," said Lancelot, slowly, "because you are cleverer than I, readier than I, superior to me in every point."

The colonel laughed, not quite merrily. Lancelot went on, holding down his shaggy brows.

"I am a brute and an ass! — And yet I do not like to tell you so. For if I am an ass, what are you?"

"Heyday!"

"Look here. — I am wasting my time and brains on ribaldry, but I am worth nothing better — at least, I think so at times; but you, who can do anything you put your hand to, what business have you, in the devil's name, to be throwing yourself away on gimcracks and fox-hunting foolery? Heavens! If I had your talents, I'd be — I'd make a name for myself before I died, if I died to make it."

The colonel griped his hand hard, rose, and looked out of the window for a few minutes. There was a dead, brooding silence, till he turned to Lancelot:

"Mr. Smith, I thank you for your honesty, but good advice may come too late. I am no saint, and God only knows how much less of one I may become; but mark my words, — if you are ever tempted by passion, and vanity, and fine ladies, to form *liaisons*, as the Jezebels call them, snares, and nets, and labyrinths of blind ditches, to keep you down through life, stumbling and grovelling, hating yourself and hating the chain to which you cling — in that hour pray — pray as if the devil

had you by the throat — to Almighty God, to help you out of that cursed slough! There is nothing else for it! — pray, I tell you!"

There was a terrible earnestness about the guardsman's face which could not be mistaken. Lancelot looked at him for a moment, and then dropped his eyes ashamed, as if he had intruded on the speaker's confidence by witnessing his emotion.

In a moment the colonel had returned to his smile and his polish.

"And now, my dear invalid, I must beg your pardon for sermonizing. What do you say to a game of *écarté?* We must play for love, or we shall excite ourselves, and scandalize Mrs. Lavington's piety." And the colonel pulled a pack of cards out of his pocket, and seeing that Lancelot was too thoughtful for play, commenced all manner of juggler's tricks, and chuckled over them like any schoolboy.

"Happy man!" thought Lancelot, "to have the strength of will which can thrust its thoughts away once and for all."

No, Lancelot! more happy are they whom God will not allow to thrust their thoughts from them till the bitter draught has done its work.

From that day, however, there was a cordial understanding between the two. They never alluded to the subject; but they had known the bottom of each other's heart. Lancelot's sickroom was now pleasant enough, and he drank in daily his new friend's perpetual stream of anecdote, till March and hunting were past, and April was half over. The old squire came up after dinner regularly (during March he had hunted

every day, and slept every evening); and the trio chatted along merrily enough, by the help of whist and backgammon, upon the surface of this little island of life, — which is, like Sinbad's, after all only the back of a floating whale, ready to dive at any moment. — And then? ——

But what was Argemone doing all this time? Argemone was busy in her boudoir (too often a true *boudoir* to her) among books and statuettes, and dried flowers, fancying herself, and not unfairly, very intellectual. She had four new manias every year; her last winter's one had been that bottle-and-squirt mania, miscalled chemistry; her spring madness was for the Greek drama. She had devoured Schlegel's lectures, and thought them divine; and now she was hard at work on Sophocles, with a little help from translations, and thought she understood him every word. Then she was somewhat High-Church in her notions, and used to go up every Wednesday and Friday to the chapel in the hills, where Lancelot had met her, for an hour's mystic devotion, set off by a little graceful asceticism. As for Lancelot, she never thought of him but as an empty-headed fox-hunter who had met with his deserts; and the brilliant accounts which the all-smoothing colonel gave at dinner of Lancelot's physical well-doing and agreeable conversation only made her set him down the sooner as a twin clever-do-nothing to the despised Bracebridge, whom she hated for keeping her father in a roar of laughter.

But her sister, little Honoria, had all the while been busy messing and cooking with her own hands for the invalid, and almost fell in love with the colonel for his watchful kindness. And here a

word about Honoria, to whom Nature, according to her wont with sisters, had given almost everything which Argemone wanted, and denied almost everything which Argemone had, except beauty. And even in that, the many-sided mother had made her a perfect contrast to her sister, — tiny and luscious, dark-eyed and dark-haired; as full of wild simple passion as an Italian, thinking little, except where she felt much — which was indeed everywhere; for she lived in a perpetual April-shower of exaggerated sympathy for all suffering, whether in novels or in life; and daily gave the lie to that shallow old calumny that "fictitious sorrows harden the heart to real ones."

Argemone was almost angry with her sometimes, when she trotted whole days about the village from school to sick-room: perhaps conscience hinted to her that her duty, too, lay rather there than among her luxurious day-dreams. But, alas! though she would have indignantly repelled the accusation of selfishness, yet in self and for self alone she lived; and while she had force of will for any so-called "self-denial," and would fast herself cross and stupefied, and quite enjoy kneeling thinly clad and barefoot on the freezing chapel-floor on a winter's morning, yet her fastidious delicacy revolted at sitting, like Honoria, beside the bed of the ploughman's consumptive daughter, in a reeking, stifling, lean-to garret, in which had slept the night before, the father, mother, and two grown-up boys, not to mention a new-married couple, the sick girl, and, alas! her baby. And of such bedchambers there were too many in Whitford Priors.

The first evening that Lancelot came downstairs,

Honoria clapped her hands outright for joy as he entered, and ran up and down for ten minutes, fetching and carrying endless unnecessary cushions and footstools; while Argemone greeted him with a cold distant bow, and a fine-lady drawl of carefully commonplace congratulations. Her heart smote her, though, as she saw the wan face and the wild, melancholy, moon-struck eyes once more glaring through and through her; she found a comfort in thinking his stare impertinent, drew herself up, and turned away; once, indeed, she could not help listening, as Lancelot thanked Mrs. Lavington for all the pious and edifying books with which the good lady had kept his room rather than his brain furnished for the last six weeks; he was going to say more, but he saw the colonel's quaint foxy eye peering at him, remembered St. Francis de Sales, and held his tongue.

But, as her destiny was, Argemone found herself, in the course of the evening, alone with Lancelot, at the open window. It was a still, hot, heavy night, after long easterly drought; sheet-lightning glimmered on the far horizon over the dark woodlands; the coming shower had sent forward as his herald a whispering draught of fragrant air.

"What a delicious shiver is creeping over those limes!" said Lancelot, half to himself.

The expression struck Argemone: it was the right one, and it seemed to open vistas of feeling and observation in the speaker which she had not suspected. There was a rich melancholy in the voice; — she turned to look at him.

"Ay," he went on; "and the same heat which crisps those thirsty leaves must breed the thunder-shower which cools them? But so it is through-

out the universe: every yearning proves the existence of an object meant to satisfy it; the same law creates both the giver and the receiver, the longing and its home."

"If one could but know sometimes what it is for which one is longing!" said Argemone, without knowing that she was speaking from her inmost heart: but thus does the soul involuntarily lay bare its most unspoken depths in the presence of its yet unknown mate, and then shudders at its own *abandon* as it first tries on the wedding-garment of Paradise.

Lancelot was not yet past the era at which young geniuses are apt to "talk book" at little.

"For what?" he answered, flashing up according to his fashion. "To be;--to be great; to have done one mighty work before we die, and live, unloved or loved, upon the lips of men. For this all long who are not mere apes and wall-flies."

"So longed the founders of Babel," answered Argemone, carelessly, to this tirade. She had risen a strange fish, the cunning beauty, and now she was trying her fancy flies over him one by one.

"And were they so far wrong?" answered he. "From the Babel society sprung our architecture, our astronomy, politics, and colonization. No doubt the old Hebrew sheiks thought them impious enough, for daring to build brick walls instead of keeping to the good old-fashioned tents, and gathering themselves into a nation instead of remaining a mere family horde; and gave their own account of the myth, just as the antediluvian savages gave theirs of that strange Eden scene, by the common interpretation of which the devil is

made the first inventor of modesty. Men are all conservatives; everything new is impious, till we get accustomed to it; and if it fails, the mob piously discover a divine vengeance in the mischance, from Babel to Catholic Emancipation."

Lancelot had stuttered horribly during the latter part of this most heterodox outburst, for he had begun to think about himself, and try to say a fine thing, suspecting all the while that it might not be true. But Argemone did not remark the stammering: the new thoughts startled and pained her; but there was a daring grace about them. She tried, as women will, to answer him with arguments, and failed, as women will fail. She was accustomed to lay down the law *à la* Madame de Staël, to *savants* and *non-savants* and be heard with reverence, as a woman should be. But poor truth-seeking Lancelot did not see what sex had to do with logic; he flew at her as if she had been a very barrister, and hunted her mercilessly up and down through all sorts of charming sophisms, as she begged the question, and shifted her ground, as thoroughly right in her conclusion as she was wrong in her reasoning, till she grew quite confused and pettish. — And then Lancelot suddenly shrank into his shell, claws and all, like an affrighted soldier-crab, hung down his head, and stammered out some incoherencies, — "N-n-not accustomed to talk to women — ladies, I mean. F-forgot myself. — Pray forgive me!" And he looked up, and her eyes, half-amused, met his, and she saw that they were filled with tears.

"What have I to forgive?" she said, more gently, wondering on what sort of strange sportsman she had fallen. "You treat me like an equal; you will

deign to argue with me. But men in general — oh, they hide their contempt for us, if not their own ignorance, under that mask of chivalrous deference!" and then in the nasal fine ladies' key, which was her shell, as bitter *brusquerie* was his, she added, with an Amazon queen's toss of the head, — "You must come and see us often. We shall suit each other, I see, better than most whom we see here."

A sneer and a blush passed together over Lancelot's ugliness.

"What, better than the glib Colonel Bracebridge yonder?"

"Oh, he is witty enough, but he lives on the surface of everything! He is altogether shallow and *blasé*. His good-nature is the fruit of want of feeling; between his gracefulness and his sneering persiflage he is a perfect Mephistopheles-Apollo."

What a snare a decently good nickname is! Out it must come, though it carry a lie on its back. But the truth was, Argemone thought herself infinitely superior to the colonel, for which simple reason she could not in the least understand him.

[By the by, how subtly Mr. Tennyson has embodied all this in "The Princess." How he shows us the woman, when she takes her stand on the false masculine ground of intellect, working out her own moral punishment, by destroying in herself the tender heart of flesh, which is either woman's highest blessing or her bitterest curse; how she loses all feminine sensibility to the undercurrent of feeling in us poor world-worn, case-hardened men, and falls from pride to sternness,

from sternness to sheer inhumanity. I should have honored myself by pleading guilty to stealing much of Argemone's character from "The Princess," had not the idea been conceived, and fairly worked out, long before the appearance of that noble poem.]

They said no more to each other that evening. Argemone was called to the piano; and Lancelot took up the "Sporting Magazine," and read himself to sleep till the party separated for the night.

Argemone went up thoughtfully to her own room. The shower had fallen, and the moon was shining bright, while every budding leaf and knot of mould steamed up cool perfume, borrowed from the treasures of the thundercloud. All around was working the infinite mystery of birth and growth, of giving and taking, of beauty and use. All things were harmonious — all things reciprocal without. Argemone felt herself needless, lonely, and out of tune with herself and nature.

She sat in the window, and listlessly read over to herself a fragment of her own poetry:

SAPPHO

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff;
Above her glared the moon; beneath, the sea.
Upon the white horizon Athos' peak
Weltered in burning haze; all airs were dead;
The sicale slept among the tamarisk's hair;
The birds sat dumb and drooping. Far below
The lazy sea-weed glistened in the sun:
The lazy sea-fowl dried their steaming wings;
The lazy swell crept whispering up the ledge,
And sank again. Great Pan was laid to rest;
And mother Earth watched by him as he slept,
And hushed her myriad children for awhile.

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff;
And sighed for sleep, for sleep that would not hear,
But left her tossing still: for night and day
A mighty hunger yearned within her heart,
Till all her veins ran fever, and her cheek,
Her long thin hands, and ivory-channell'd feet,
Were wasted with the wasting of her soul.
Then peevishly she flung her on her face,
And hid her eyeballs from the blinding glare,
And fingered at the grass, and tried to cool
Her crisp hot lips against the crisp hot sward:
And then she raised her head, and upward cast
Wild looks from homeless eyes, whose liquid light
Gleamed out between deep f lds of blue-black hair,
As gleam twin lakes between the purple peaks
Of deep Parnassus, at the mournful moon.
Beside her lay a lyre. She snatched the shell,
And waked wild music from its silver strings;
Then tossed it sadly by, — "Ah, hush!" she cries,
"Dead offspring of the tortoise and the mine!
Why mock my discords with thine harmonies?
Although a thrice-Olympian lot be thine,
Only to echo back in every tone,
The moods of nobler natures than thine own."

"No!" she said. "That soft and rounded rhyme suits ill with Sappho's fitful and wayward agonies. She should burst out at once into wild passionate life-weariness, and disgust at that universe, with whose beauty she has filled her eyes in vain, to find it always a dead picture, unsatisfying, unloving — as I have found it."

Sweet self-deceiver! had you no other reason for choosing as your heroine Sappho, the victim of the idolatry of intellect — trying in vain to fill her heart with the friendship of her own sex, and then sinking into mere passion for a handsome boy, and so down into self-contempt and suicide?

She was conscious, I do believe, of no other

reason than that she gave ; but consciousness is a dim candle — over a deep mine.

"After all," she said pettishly, "people will call it a mere imitation of Shelley's 'Alastor.' And what harm if it is? Is there to be no female Alastor? Has not the woman as good a right as the man to long after ideal beauty — to pine and die if she cannot find it; and regenerate herself in its light?"

"Yo-hoo-oo-oo! Youp, youp! Oh-hooo!" arose doleful through the echoing shrubbery.

Argemone started and looked out. It was not a banshee, but a forgotten fox-hound puppy, sitting mournfully on the gravel-walk beneath, staring at the clear ghastly moon.

She laughed and blushed — there was a rebuke in it. She turned to go to rest; and as she knelt and prayed at her velvet faldstool, among all the nicknacks which nowadays make a luxury of devotion, was it strange if, after she had prayed for the fate of nations and churches, and for those who, as she thought, were fighting at Oxford the cause of universal truth and reverent antiquity, she remembered in her petitions the poor godless youth, with his troubled and troubling eloquence? But it was strange that she blushed when she mentioned his name — why should she not pray for him as she prayed for others?

Perhaps she felt that she did not pray for him as she prayed for others.

She left the Æolian harp in the window, as a luxury if she should wake, and coiled herself up among lace pillows and eider blemos; and the hound coiled himself up on the gravel-walk, after a solemn vesper ceremony of three turns round in

his own length, looking vainly for a "soft stone." The finest of us are animals after all, and live by eating and sleeping; and, taken as animals, not so badly off either — unless we happen to be Dorsetshire laborers — or Spitalfields weavers — or colliery children — or marching soldiers — or, I am afraid, one half of English souls this day.

And Argemone dreamed; — that she was a fox, flying for her life through a churchyard — and Lancelot was a hound, yelling and leaping, in a red coat and white buckskins, close upon her — and she felt his hot breath, and saw his white teeth glare. . . . And then her father was there: and he was an Italian boy, and played the organ — and Lancelot was a dancing dog, and stood up and danced to the tune of "*C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour,*" pitifully enough, in his red coat — and she stood up and danced too; but she found her fox-fur dress insufficient, and begged hard for a paper frill — which was denied her: whereat she cried bitterly and woke; and saw the Night peeping in with her bright diamond eyes, and blushed, and hid her beautiful face in the pillows, and fell asleep again.

What the little imp, who managed this puppet-show on Argemone's brain-stage, may have intended to symbolize thereby, and whence he stole his actors and stage-properties, and whether he got up the interlude for his own private fun, or for that of a choir of brother Eulenspiegels, or, finally, for the edification of Argemone as to her own history, past, present, or future, are questions which we must leave unanswered, till physicians have become a little more of metaphysicians, and have given up their present plan of ignoring for

nine hundred and ninety-nine pages that most awful and significant custom of dreaming, and then in the thousandth page talking the boldest materialist twaddle about it.

In the meantime, Lancelot, contrary to the colonel's express commands, was sitting up to indite the following letter to his cousin, the Tractarian curate:

"You complain that I waste my time in field-sports: how do you know that I waste my time? I find within myself certain appetites; and I suppose that the God whom you say made me, made those appetites as a part of me. Why are they to be crushed any more than any other part of me? I am the whole of what I find in myself — am I to pick and choose myself out of myself? And besides, I feel that the exercise of freedom, activity, foresight, daring, independent self-determination, even in a few minutes' burst across country, strengthens me in mind as well as in body. It might not do so to you; but you are of a different constitution, and, from all I see, the power of a man's muscles, the excitability of his nerves, the shape and balance of his brain, make him what he is. Else what is the meaning of physiognomy? Every man's destiny, as the Turks say, stands written on his forehead. One does not need two glances at your face to know that you would not enjoy fox-hunting, that you would enjoy book-learning and 'refined repose,' as they are pleased to call it. Every man carries his character in his brain. You all know that, and act upon it when you have to deal with a man for sixpence; but your religious dogmas, which make out that every man comes into the world equally brutish and fiendish, make you afraid to confess it. I don't quarrel with a 'douce' man like you, with a large organ of veneration, for following your bent. But if I am fiery, with a huge

cerebellum, why am I not to follow mine? — For that is what you do, after all — what you like best. It is all very easy for a man to talk of conquering his appetites, when he has none to conquer. Try and conquer your organ of veneration, or of benevolence, or of calculation — then I will call you an ascetic. Why not! — The same Power which made the front of one's head made the back, I suppose?

"And, I tell you, hunting does me good. It awakens me out of my dreary mill-round of metaphysics. It sweeps away that infernal web of self-consciousness, and absorbs me in outward objects; and my red-hot Perillus's bull cools in proportion as my horse warms. I tell you, I never saw a man who could cut out his way across country who could not cut his way through better things when his turn came. The cleverest and noblest fellows are sure to be the best riders in the long run. And as for bad company and 'the world,' when you take to going in the first-class carriages for fear of meeting a swearing sailor in the second-class — when those who have 'renounced the world' give up buying and selling in the funds — when my uncle, the pious banker, who will only 'associate' with the truly religious, gives up dealing with any scoundrel or heathen who can 'do business' with him — then you may quote pious people's opinions to me. In God's name, if the Stock Exchange, and railway stagging, and the advertisements in the Protestant Hue-and-Cry, and the frantic Mammon-hunting which has been for the last fifty years the peculiar pursuit of the majority of Quakers, Dissenters, and Religious Churchmen, are not *The World*, what is? I don't complain of them, though; Puritanism has interdicted to them all art, all excitement, all amusement — except money-making. It is their *dernier ressort*, poor souls!

"But you must explain to us naughty fox-hunters

how all this agrees with the good book. We see plainly enough, in the meantime, how it agrees with 'poor human nature.' We see that the 'religious world,' like the 'great world,' and the 'sporting world,' and the 'literary world,'

> 'Compounds for sins she is inclined to,
> By damning those she has no mind to;'

and that because England is a money-making country, and money-making is an effeminate pursuit, therefore all sedentary and spoony sins, like covetousness, slander, bigotry, and self-conceit, are to be cockered and plastered over, while the more masculine vices, and no-vices also, are mercilessly hunted down by your cold-blooded, soft-handed religionists.

"This is a more quiet letter than usual from me, my dear coz, for many of your reproofs cut me home: they angered me at the time; but I deserve them. I am miserable, self-disgusted, self-helpless, craving for freedom, and yet crying aloud for some one to come and guide me, and teach me; and *who is there in these days who could teach a fast man, even if he would try?* Be sure, that as long as you and yours make piety a synonym for unmanliness, you will never convert either me or any other good sportsman.

"By the by, my dear fellow, was I asleep or awake when I seemed to read in the postscript of your last letter, something about 'being driven to Rome after all'? . . . Why thither, of all places in heaven or earth? You know, I have no party interest in the question. All creeds are very much alike to me just now. But allow me to ask, in a spirit of the most tolerant curiosity, what possible celestial bait, either of the useful or the agreeable kind, can the present excellent Pope, or his adherents, hold out to you in compensation for the solid earthly pudding which you would have to

desert? . . . I dare say, though, that I shall not comprehend your answer when it comes. I am, you know, utterly deficient in that sixth sense of the angelic or supralunar beautiful, which fills your soul with ecstasy. You, I know, expect and long to become an angel after death; I am under the strange hallucination that my body is part of me, and in spite of old Plotinus, look with horror at a disembodiment till the giving of that new body, the great perfection of which, in your eyes, and those of every one else, seems to be, that it will be less, and not more of a body, than our present one. . . . Is this hope, to me at once inconceivable and contradictory, palpable and valuable enough to you to send you to that Italian Avernus, to get it made a little more certain? If so, I despair of your making your meaning intelligible to a poor fellow wallowing, like me, in the Hylic Borboros — or whatever else you may choose to call the unfortunate fact of being flesh and blood. . . . Still, write."

CHAPTER III

NEW ACTORS, AND A NEW STAGE

WHEN Argemone rose in the morning, her first thought was of Lancelot. His face haunted her. The wild brilliance of his intellect struggling through foul smoke-clouds, had haunted her still more. She had heard of his profligacy, his bursts of fierce Berserk-madness; and yet now these very faults, instead of repelling, seemed to attract her, and intensify her longing to save him. She would convert him; purify him; harmonize his discords. And that very wish gave her a peace she had never felt before. She had formed her idea; she had now a purpose for which to live, and she determined to concentrate herself for the work, and longed for the moment when she should meet Lancelot, and begin — how, she did not very clearly see.

It is an old jest — the fair devotee trying to convert the young rake. Men of the world laugh heartily at it; and so does the devil, no doubt. If any readers wish to be fellow-jesters with that personage, they may; but, as sure as old Saxon women-worship remains forever a blessed and healing law of life, the devotee may yet convert the rake — and, perhaps, herself into the bargain.

Argemone looked almost angrily round at her beloved books and drawings; for they spoke a

message to her which they had never spoken before, of self-centred ambition. "Yes," she said aloud to herself, "I have been selfish, utterly! Art, poetry, science — I believe, after all, that I have only loved them for my own sake, not for theirs, because they would make *me* something, feed my conceit of my own talents. How infinitely more glorious to find my work-field and my prize, not in dead forms and colors, or ink-and-paper theories, but in a living, immortal, human spirit! I will study no more, except the human heart, and only that to purify and ennoble it."

True, Argemone; and yet, like all resolutions, somewhat less than the truth. That morning, indeed, her purpose was simple as God's own light. She never dreamed of exciting Lancelot's admiration, even his friendship for herself. She would have started as from a snake, from the issue which the reader very clearly foresees, that Lancelot would fall in love, not with Young Englandism, but with Argemone Lavington. But yet self is not eradicated even from a woman's heart in one morning before breakfast. Besides, it is not "benevolence," but love — the real Cupid of flesh and blood, who can first

> "Touch the chord of self which, trembling,
> Passes in music out of sight."

But a time for all things; and it is now time for Argemone to go down to breakfast, having prepared some dozen imaginary dialogues between herself and Lancelot, in which, of course, her eloquence always had the victory. She had yet to learn, that it is better sometimes not to settle

in one's heart what we shall speak, for the Everlasting Will has good works ready prepared for us to walk in, by what we call fortunate accident; and it shall be given us in that day and that hour what we shall speak.

Lancelot, in the meantime, shrank from meeting Argemone; and was quite glad of the weakness which kept him upstairs. Whether he was afraid of her — whether he was ashamed of himself or of his crutches, I cannot tell, but I dare say, reader, you are getting tired of all this soul-dissecting. So we will have a bit of action again, for the sake of variety, if for nothing better.

Of all the species of lovely scenery which England holds, none, perhaps, is more exquisite than the banks of the chalk-rivers — the perfect limpidity of the water, the gay and luxuriant vegetation of the banks and ditches, the masses of noble wood embosoming the villages, the unique beauty of the water-meadows, living sheets of emerald and silver, tinkling and sparkling, cool under the fiercest sun, brilliant under the blackest clouds. — There, if anywhere, one would have expected to find Arcadia among fertility, loveliness, industry, and wealth. But, alas for the sad reality! the cool breath of those glittering water-meadows too often floats laden with poisonous miasma. Those picturesque villages are generally the perennial hotbeds of fever and ague, of squalid penury, sottish profligacy, dull discontent too stale for words. There is luxury in the park, wealth in the huge farm-steadings, knowledge in the parsonage: but the poor? those by whose dull labor all that luxury and wealth,

ay, even that knowledge, is made possible — what are they? We shall see, please God, ere the story's end.

But of all this Lancelot as yet thought nothing. He, too, had to be emancipated, as much as Argemone, from selfish dreams; to learn to work trustfully in the living Present, not to gloat sentimentally over the unreturning Past. But his time was not yet come; and little he thought of all the work which lay ready for him within a mile of the Priory, as he watched the ladies go out for the afternoon, and slipped down to the Nun's-pool on his crutches to smoke and fish, and build castles in the air.

The Priory, with its rambling courts and gardens, stood on an island in the river. The upper stream flowed in a straight artificial channel through the garden, still and broad, towards the Priory mill; while just above the Priory wall half the river fell over a high weir, with all its appendages of bucks and hatchways, and eel-baskets, into the Nun's-pool, and then swept round under the ivied walls, with their fantastic turrets and gables, and little loopholed windows, peering out over the stream, as it hurried down over the shallows to join the race below the mill. A postern door in the walls opened on an ornamental wooden bridge across the weir-head — a favorite haunt of all fishers and sketchers who were admitted to the dragon-guarded Elysium of Whitford Priors. Thither Lancelot went, congratulating himself, strange to say, in having escaped the only human being whom he loved on earth.

He found on the weir-bridge two of the keepers.

The younger one, Tregarva, was a stately, thoughtful-looking Cornishman, some six feet three in height, with thews and sinews in proportion. He was sitting on the bridge looking over a basket of eel-lines, and listening silently to the chat of his companion.

Old Harry Verney, the other keeper, was a character in his way, and a very bad character too, though he was a patriarch among all the gamekeepers of the vale. He was a short, wiry, bandy-legged, ferret-visaged old man, with grizzled hair, and a wizened face tanned brown and purple by constant exposure. Between rheumatism and constant handling the rod and gun, his fingers were crooked like a hawk's claws. He kept his left eye always shut, apparently to save trouble in shooting; and squinted, and sniffed, and peered, with a stooping back and protruded chin, as if he were perpetually on the watch for fish, flesh, and fowl, vermin and Christian. The friendship between himself and the Scotch terrier at his heels would have been easily explained by Lessing, for in the transmigration of souls the spirit of Harry Verney had evidently once animated a dog of that breed. He was dressed in a huge thick fustian jacket, scratched, stained, and patched, with bulging, greasy pockets; a cast of flies round a battered hat, riddled with shot-holes, a dog-whistle at his button-hole, and an old gun cut short over his arm, bespoke his business.

"I seed that 'ere Crawy against Ashy Down Plantations last night, I'll be sworn," said he, in a squeaking, sneaking tone.

"Well, what harm was the man doing?"

"Oh, ay, that 's the way you young 'uns talk. If he warn't doing mischief, he 'd 'a' been glad to have been doing it, I 'll warrant. If I 'd been as young as you, I 'd have picked a quarrel with him soon enough, and found a cause for tackling him. It 's worth a brace of sovereigns with the squire to haul him up. Eh? eh? Ain't old Harry right now?"

"Humph!" growled the younger man.

"There, then, you get me a snare and a hare by to-morrow night," went on old Harry, "and see if I don't nab him. It won't lay long under the plantation afore he picks it up. You mind to snare me a hare to-night, now!"

"I 'll do no such thing, nor help to bring false accusations against any man!"

"False accusations!" answered Harry, in his cringing way. "Look at that now, for a keeper to say! Why, if he don't happen to have a snare just there, he has somewhere else, you know. Eh? Ain't old Harry right now, eh?"

"Maybe."

"There, don't say I don't know nothing then. Eh? What matter who put the snare down, or the hare in, perwided he takes it up, man? If 't was his'n he 'd be all the better pleased. The most notoriousest poacher as walks unhung!" And old Harry lifted up his crooked hands in pious indignation.

"I 'll have no more gamekeeping, Harry. What with hunting down Christians as if they were vermin, all night, and being cursed by the squire all day, I 'd sooner be a sheriff's runner, or a negro slave."

"Ay, ay! that 's the way the young dogs always

bark afore they're broke in, and gets to like it, as the eels does skinning. Have n't I bounced pretty near out of my skin many a time afore now, on this here very bridge, with 'Harry, jump in, you stupid hound!' and 'Harry, get out, you one-eyed tailor!' And then, if one of the gentlemen lost a fish with their clumsiness — Oh, Father! to hear 'em let out at me and my landing-net, and curse fit to fright the devil! Dash their sarcy tongues! Eh! Don't old Harry know their ways? Don't he know 'em, now?"

"Ay," said the young man, bitterly. "We break the dogs, and we load the guns, and we find the game, and mark the game, — and then they call themselves sportsmen; we choose the flies, and we bait the spinning-hooks, and we show them where the fish lie, and then when they've hooked them, they can't get them out without us and the spoon-net; and then they go home to the ladies and boast of the lot of fish they killed — and who thinks of the keeper?"

"Oh! ah! Then don't say old Harry knows nothing, then. How nicely, now, you and I might get a living off this 'ere manor, if the landlords was served like the French ones was. Eh, Paul?" chuckled old Harry. "Would n't we pay our taxes with pheasants and grayling, that's all, eh? Ain't old Harry right now, eh?"

The old fox was fishing for an assent, not for its own sake, for he was a fierce Tory, and would have stood up to be shot at any day, not only for his master's sake, but for the sake of a single pheasant of his master's; but he hated Tregarva for many reasons, and was daily on the watch to

entrap him on some of his peculiar points, whereof he had, as we shall find, a good many.

What would have been Tregarva's answer, I cannot tell; but Lancelot, who had unintentionally overheard the greater part of the conversation, disliked being any longer a listener, and came close to them.

"Here's your gudgeons and minnows, sir, as you bespoke," quoth Harry; "and here's that paternoster as you gave me to rig up. Beautiful minnows, sir, white as a silver spoon. — They're the ones now, ain't they, sir, eh?"

"They'll do!"

"Well, then, don't say old Harry don't know nothing, that's all, eh?" and the old fellow toddled off, peering and twisting his head about like a starling.

"An odd old fellow that, Tregarva," said Lancelot.

"Very, sir, considering who made him," answered the Cornishman, touching his hat, and then thrusting his nose deeper than ever into the eel-basket.

"Beautiful stream this," said Lancelot, who had a continual longing — right or wrong — to chat with his inferiors; and was proportionately sulky and reserved to his superiors.

"Beautiful enough, sir," said the keeper, with an emphasis on the first word.

"Why, has it any other fault?"

"Not so wholesome as pretty, sir."

"What harm does it do?"

"Fever, and ague, and rheumatism, sir."

"Where?" asked Lancelot, a little amused by the man's laconic answers.

"Wherever the white fog spreads, sir."

"Where 's that?"

"Everywhere, sir."

"And when?"

"Always, sir."

Lancelot burst out laughing. The man looked up at him slowly and seriously.

"You would n't laugh, sir, if you 'd seen much of the inside of these cottages round."

"Really," said Lancelot, "I was only laughing at our making such very short work of such a long and serious story. Do you mean that the unhealthiness of this country is wholly caused by the river?"

"No, sir. The river-damps are God's sending; and so they are not too bad to bear. But there 's more of man's sending, that is too bad to bear."

"What do you mean?"

"Are men likely to be healthy when they are worse housed than a pig?"

"No."

"And worse fed than a hound?"

"Good heavens! No!"

"Or packed together to sleep, like pilchards in a barrel?"

"But, my good fellow, do you mean that the laborers here are in that state?"

"It is n't far to walk, sir. Perhaps some day, when the May-fly is gone off, and the fish won't rise awhile, you could walk down and see. I beg your pardon, sir, though, for thinking of such a thing. They are not places fit for gentlemen, that 's certain." There was a staid irony in his tone, which Lancelot felt.

"But the clergyman goes?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Miss Honoria goes?"

"Yes, God Almighty bless her!"

"And do not they see that all goes right?"

The giant twisted his huge limbs, as if trying to avoid an answer, and yet not daring to do so.

"Do clergymen go about among the poor much, sir, at college, before they are ordained?"

Lancelot smiled, and shook his head.

"I thought so, sir. Our good vicar is like the rest hereabouts. God knows, he stints neither time nor money — the souls of the poor are well looked after, and their bodies too — as far as his purse will go; but that 's not far."

"Is he ill off, then?"

"The living 's worth some forty pounds a year. The great tithes, they say, are worth better than twelve hundred; but Squire Lavington has them."

"Oh, I see!" said Lancelot.

"I 'm glad you do, sir, for I don't," meekly answered Tregarva. "But the vicar, sir, he is a kind man, and a good; but the poor don't understand him, nor he them. He is too learned, sir, and, saving your presence, too fond of his Prayer-book."

"One can't be too fond of a good thing."

"Not unless you make an idol of it, sir, and fancy that men's souls were made for the Prayer-book, and not the Prayer-book for them."

"But cannot he expose and redress these evils, if they exist?"

Tregarva twisted about again.

"I do not say that I think it, sir; but this I know, that every poor man in the vale thinks it — that the parsons are afraid of the landlords.

They must see these things, for they are not blind; and they try to plaster them up out of their own pockets."

"But why, in God's name, don't they strike at the root of the matter, and go straight to the landlords and tell them the truth?" asked Lancelot.

"So people say, sir. I see no reason for it except the one which I gave you. Besides, sir, you must remember that a man can't quarrel with his own kin; and so many of them are their squire's brothers, or sons, or nephews."

"Or good friends with him, at least."

"Ay, sir, and, to do them justice, they had need, for the poor's sake, to keep good friends with the squire. How else are they to get a farthing for schools, or coal-subscriptions, or lying-in societies, or lending libraries, or penny clubs? If they spoke their minds to the great ones, sir, how could they keep the parish together?"

"You seem to see both sides of a question, certainly. But what a miserable state of things, that the laboring man should require all these societies, and charities, and helps from the rich! — that an industrious freeman cannot live without alms!"

"So I have thought this long time," quietly answered Tregarva.

"But Miss Honoria, — she is not afraid to tell her father the truth?"

"Suppose, sir, when Adam and Eve were in the garden, that all the devils had come up and played their fiends' tricks before them, — do you think they 'd have seen any shame in it?"

"I really cannot tell," said Lancelot, smiling,

"Then I can, sir. They 'd have seen no more harm in it than there was harm already in themselves; and that was none. A man's eyes can only see what they 've learnt to see."

Lancelot started: it was a favorite *dictum* of his in Carlyle's works.

"Where did you get that thought, my friend?"

"By seeing, sir."

"But what has that to do with Miss Honoria?"

"She is an angel of holiness herself, sir; and, therefore, she goes on without blushing or suspecting, where our blood would boil again. She sees people in want, and thinks it must be so, and pities them and relieves them. But she don't know want herself; and, therefore, she don't know that it makes men beasts and devils. She 's as pure as God's light herself; and, therefore, she fancies every one is as spotless as she is. And there 's another mistake in your charitable great people, sir. When they see poor folk sick or hungry before their eyes, they pull out their purses fast enough, God bless them; for they would n't like to be so themselves. But the oppression that goes on all the year round, and the want that goes on all the year round, and the filth, and the lying, and the swearing, and the profligacy, that go on all the year round, and the sickening weight of debt, and the miserable grinding anxiety from rent-day to rent-day, and Saturday night to Saturday night, that crushes a man's soul down, and drives every thought out of his head but how he is to fill his stomach and warm his back, and keep a house over his head, till he dare n't for his life take his thoughts one

moment off the meat that perisheth — oh, sir, they never felt this; and, therefore, they never dream that there are thousands who pass them in their daily walks who feel this, and feel nothing else!"

This outburst was uttered with an earnestness and majesty which astonished Lancelot. He forgot the subject in the speaker.

"You are a very extraordinary gamekeeper!" said he.

"When the Lord shows a man a thing, he can't well help seeing it," answered Tregarva, in his usual staid tone.

There was a pause. The keeper looked at him with a glance, before which Lancelot's eyes fell.

"Hell is paved with hearsays, sir, and as all this talk of mine is hearsay, if you are in earnest, sir, go and see for yourself. I know you have a kind heart, and they tell me that you are a great scholar, which would to God I was! so you ought not to condescend to take my word for anything which you can look into yourself;" with which sound piece of common-sense Tregarva returned busily to his eel-lines.

"Hand me the rod and can, and help me out along the buck-stage," said Lancelot; "I must have some more talk with you, my fine fellow."

"Amen," answered Tregarva, as he assisted our lame hero along a huge beam which stretched out into the pool; and having settled him there, returned mechanically to his work, humming a Wesleyan hymn-tune.

Lancelot sat and tried to catch perch, but Tregarva's words haunted him. He lighted his

cigar, and tried to think earnestly over the matter, but he had got into the wrong place for thinking. All his thoughts, all his sympathies, were drowned in the rush and whirl of the water. He forgot everything else in the mere animal enjoyment of sight and sound. Like many young men at his crisis of life, he had given himself up to the mere contemplation of Nature till he had become her slave; and now a luscious scene, a singing bird, were enough to allure his mind away from the most earnest and awful thoughts. He tried to think, but the river would not let him. It thundered and spouted out behind him from the hatches, and leapt madly past him, and caught his eyes in spite of him, and swept them away down its dancing waves, and let them go again only to sweep them down again and again, till his brain felt a delicious dizziness from the everlasting rush and the everlasting roar. And then below, how it spread, and writhed, and whirled into transparent fans, hissing and twining snakes, polished glass-wreaths, huge crystal bells, which boiled up from the bottom, and dived again beneath long threads of creamy foam, and swung round posts and roots, and rushed blackening under dark weed-fringed boughs, and gnawed at the marly banks, and shook the ever-restless bulrushes, till it was swept away and down over the white pebbles and olive weeds, in one broad rippling sheet of molten silver, towards the distant sea. Downwards it fleeted ever, and bore his thoughts floating on its oily stream; and the great trout, with their yellow sides and peacock backs, lounged among the eddies, and the silver grayling dimpled and wandered upon the shallows,

and the may-flies flickered and rustled round him like water fairies, with their green gauzy wings; the coot clanked musically among the reeds; the frogs hummed their ceaseless vesper-monotone; the kingfisher darted from his hole in the bank like a blue spark of electric light; the swallows' bills snapped as they twined and hawked above the pool; the swift's wings whirred like musket-balls, as they rushed screaming past his head; and ever the river fleeted by, bearing his eyes away down the current, till its wild eddies began to glow with crimson beneath the setting sun. The complex harmony of sights and sounds slid softly over his soul, and he sank away into a still day-dream, too passive for imagination, too deep for meditation, and

> "Beauty born of murmuring sound,
> Did pass into his face."

Blame him not. There are more things in a man's heart than ever get in through his thoughts.

On a sudden, a soft voice behind him startled him.

"Can a poor cockney artist venture himself along this timber without falling in?"

Lancelot turned.

"Come out to me, and if you stumble, the naiads will rise out of their depths, and 'hold up their pearled wrists' to save their favorite."

The artist walked timidly out along the beams, and sat down beside Lancelot, who shook him warmly by the hand.

"Welcome, Claude Mellot, and all lovely en thusiasms and symbolisms! Expound to me, now,

the meaning of that water-lily leaf and its grand simple curve, as it lies sleeping there in the back eddy."

"Oh, I am too amused to philosophize. The fair Argemone has just been treating me to her three hundred and sixty-fifth philippic against my unoffending beard."

"Why, what fault can she find with such a graceful and natural ornament?"

"Just this, my dear fellow, that it is natural. As it is, she considers me only 'intelligent-looking.' If the beard were away, my face, she says, would be 'so refined!' And, I suppose, if I was just a little more effeminate and pale, with a nice retreating under-jaw and a drooping lip, and a meek, peaking simper, like your starved Romish saints, I should be 'so spiritual!' And if, again, to complete the climax, I did but shave my head like a Chinese, I should be a model for St. Francis himself!"

"But really, after all, why make yourself so singular by this said beard?"

"I wear it for a testimony and a sign that a man has no right to be ashamed of the mark of manhood. Oh, that one or two of your Protestant clergymen, who ought to be perfect ideal men, would have the courage to get up into the pulpit in a long beard, and testify that the very essential idea of Protestantism is the dignity and divinity of man as God made him! Our forefathers were not ashamed of their beards; but now even the soldier is only allowed to keep his mustache, while our quill-driving masses shave themselves as close as they can; and in proportion to a man's piety he wears less hair, from the

young curate who shaves off his whiskers, to the Popish priest who shaves his crown!"

"What do you say, then, to cutting off nuns' hair?"

"I say, that extremes meet, and prudish Manichæism always ends in sheer indecency. Those Papists have forgotten what woman was made for, and therefore they have forgotten that a woman's hair is her glory, for it was given to her for a covering: as says your friend, Paul the Hebrew, who, by the by, had as fine theories of art as he had of society, if he had only lived fifteen hundred years later, and had a chance of working them out."

"How remarkably orthodox you are!" said Lancelot, smiling.

"How do you know that I am not? You never heard me deny the old creed. But what if an artist ought to be of all creeds at once? My business is to represent the beautiful, and therefore to accept it wherever I find it. Yours is to be a philosopher, and find the true."

"But the beautiful must be truly beautiful to be worth anything; and so you, too, must search for the true."

"Yes; truth of form, color, chiaroscuro. They are worthy to occupy me a life; for they are eternal — or at least that which they express: and if I am to get at the symbolized unseen, it must be through the beauty of the symbolizing phenomenon. If I, who live by art, for art, in art, or you either, who seem as much a born artist as myself, am to have a religion, it must be a worship of the fountain of art — of the

> 'Spirit of beauty, who doth consecrate
> With his own hues whate'er he shines upon.'"

She drew him away, as women only know how, from the rest of the party, who were chatting and laughing with Claude. She had shown off her fancied indifference to Lancelot before them, and now began in a softer voice —

"Why will you be so shy and lonely, Mr. Smith?"

"Because I am not fit for your society."

"Who tells you so? Why will you not become so?"

Lancelot hung down his head.

"As long as fish and game are your only society, you will become more and more *morne* and self-absorbed."

"Really fish were the last things of which I was thinking when you came. My whole heart was filled with the beauty of nature, and nothing else."

There was an opening for one of Argemone's preconcerted orations.

"Had you no better occupation," she said gently, "than nature, the first day of returning to the open air after so frightful and dangerous an accident? Were there no thanks due to One above?"

Lancelot understood her.

"How do you know that I was not even then showing my thankfulness?"

"What! with a cigar and a fishing-rod?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

Argemone really could not tell at the moment. The answer upset her scheme entirely.

"Might not that very admiration of nature have been an act of worship?" continued our hero. "How can we better glorify the worker than by delighting in his work?"

"Ah!" sighed the lady, "why trust to these self-willed methods, and neglect the noble and exquisite forms which the Church has prepared for us as embodiments for every feeling of our hearts?"

"*Every* feeling, Miss Lavington?"

Argemone hesitated. She had made the good old stock assertion, as in duty bound; but she could not help recollecting that there were several Popish books of devotion at that moment on her table, which seemed to her to patch a gap or two in the Prayer-book.

"My temple as yet," said Lancelot, "is only the heaven and the earth; my church-music I can hear all day long, whenever I have the sense to be silent, and 'hear my mother sing;' my priests and preachers are every bird and bee, every flower and cloud. Am I not well enough furnished? Do you want to reduce my circular infinite chapel to an oblong hundred-foot one? My sphere harmonies to the Gregorian tones in four parts? My world-wide priesthood, with their endless variety of costume, to one not over-educated gentleman in a white sheet? And my dreams of naiads and flower-fairies, and the bluebells ringing God's praises, as they do in 'The Story without an End,' for the gross reality of naughty charity children, with their pockets full of apples, bawling out Hebrew psalms of which they neither feel nor understand a word?"

Argemone tried to look very much shocked at this piece of bombast. Lancelot evidently meant it as such, but he eyed her all the while as if there was solemn earnest under the surface.

"Oh, Mr. Smith!" she said, "how can you

"As poor Shelley has it; and much peace of mind it gave him!" answered Lancelot. "I have grown sick lately of such dreary tinsel abstractions. When you look through the glitter of the words, your 'spirit of beauty' simply means certain shapes and colors which please you in beautiful things and in beautiful people."

"Vile nominalist! renegade from the ideal and all its glories!" said Claude, laughing.

"I don't care sixpence now for the ideal! I want not beauty, but some beautiful thing — a woman perhaps," and he sighed. "But at least a person — a living, loving person — all lovely itself, and giving loveliness to all things! If I must have an ideal, let it be, for mercy's sake, a realized one."

Claude opened his sketch-book.

"We shall get swamped in these metaphysical oceans, my dear dreamer. But lo, here come a couple, as near ideals as any in these degenerate days — the two poles of beauty: the *milieu* of which would be Venus with us Pagans, or the Virgin Mary with the Catholics. Look at them! Honoria the dark — symbolic of passionate depth; Argemone the fair, type of intellectual light! Oh, that I were a Zeuxis to unite them instead of having to paint them in two separate pictures, and split perfection in half, as everything is split in this piecemeal world!"

"You will have the honor of a sitting this afternoon, I suppose, from both beauties?"

"I hope so, for my own sake. There is no path left to immortality, or bread either, now for us poor artists but portrait-painting."

"I envy you your path, when it leads through such Elysiums," said Lancelot.

"Come here, gentlemen both!" cried Argemone from the bridge.

"Fairly caught!" grumbled Lancelot. "You must go, at least; my lameness will excuse me, I hope."

The two ladies were accompanied by Bracebridge, a gazelle which he had given Argemone, and a certain miserable cur of Honoria's adopting, who plays an important part in this story, and, therefore, deserves a little notice. Honoria had rescued him from a watery death in the village pond, by means of the colonel, who had revenged himself for a pair of wet feet by utterly corrupting the dog's morals, and teaching him every week to answer to some fresh scandalous name.

But Lancelot was not to escape. Instead of moving on, as he had hoped, the party stood looking over the bridge, and talking — he took for granted, poor thin-skinned fellow — of him. And for once his suspicions were right; for he overheard Argemone say —

"I wonder how Mr. Smith can be so rude as to sit there in my presence over his stupid perch! Smoking those horrid cigars, too! How selfish those field-sports do make men!"

"Thank you!" said the colonel, with a low bow. Lancelot rose.

"If a country girl, now, had spoken in that tone," said he to himself, "it would have been called at least 'saucy' —— but Mammon's elect ones may do anything. Well — here I come, limping to my new tyrant's feet, like Goethe's bear to Lili's."

dare talk so of a liturgy compiled by the wisest and holiest of all countries and ages! You revile that of whose beauty you are not qualified to judge!"

"There must be a beauty in it all, or such as you are would not love it."

"Oh," she said hopefully, "that you would but try the Church system! How you would find it harmonize and methodize every day, every thought for you! But I cannot explain myself. Why not go to our vicar and open your doubts to him?"

"Pardon, but you must excuse me."

"Why? He is one of the saintliest of men!"

"To tell the truth, I have been to him already."

"You do not mean it! And what did he tell you?"

"What the rest of the world does — hearsays."

"But did you not find him most kind?"

"I went to him to be comforted and guided. He received me as a criminal. He told me that my first duty was penitence; that as long as I lived the life I did, he could not dare to cast his pearls before swine by answering my doubts; that I was in a state incapable of appreciating spiritual truths; and, therefore, he had no right to tell me any."

"And what did he tell you?"

"Several spiritual lies instead, I thought. He told me, hearing me quote Schiller, to beware of the Germans, for they were all Pantheists at heart. I asked him whether he included Lange and Bunsen, and it appeared that he had never read a German book in his life. He then flew furiously at Mr. Carlyle, and I found that all he

knew of him was from a certain review in the 'Quarterly.' He called Boehme a theosophic Atheist. I should have burst out at that, had I not read the very words in a High Church review the day before, and hoped that he was not aware of the impudent falsehood which he was retailing. Whenever I feebly interposed an objection to anything he said (for, after all, he talked on), he told me to hear the Catholic Church. I asked him which Catholic Church? He said the English. I asked him whether it was to be the Church of the sixth century, or the thirteenth, or the seventeenth, or the eighteenth? He told me the one and eternal Church, which belonged as much to the nineteenth century as to the first. I begged to know whether, then, I was to hear the Church according to Simeon, or according to Newman, or according to St. Paul; for they seemed to me a little at variance? He told me, austerely enough, that the mind of the Church was embodied in her Liturgy and Articles. To which I answered, that the mind of the episcopal clergy might, perhaps, be; but, then, how happened it that they were always quarrelling and calling hard names about the sense of those very documents? And so I left him, assuring him that, living in the nineteenth century, I wanted to hear the Church of the nineteenth century, and no other; and should be most happy to listen to her, as soon as she had made up her mind what to say."

Argemone was angry and disappointed. She felt she could not cope with Lancelot's quaint logic, which, however unsound, cut deeper into questions than she had yet looked for herself.

Somehow, too, she was tongue-tied before him just when she wanted to be most eloquent in behalf of her principles; and that fretted her still more. But his manner puzzled her most of all. First he would run on with his face turned away, as if soliloquizing out into the air, and then suddenly look round at her with most fascinating humility; and, then, in a moment, a dark shade would pass over his countenance, and he would look like one possessed, and his lips wreathe in a sinister artificial smile, and his wild eyes glare through and through her with such cunning understanding of himself and her, that, for the first time in her life, she quailed and felt frightened, as if in the power of a madman. She turned hastily away to shake off the spell.

He sprang after her, almost on his knees, and looked up into her beautiful face with an imploring cry.

"What, do you, too, throw me off? Will you, too, treat the poor wild uneducated sportsman as a Pariah and an outcast, because he is not ashamed to be a man? — because he cannot stuff his soul's hunger with cut-and-dried hearsays, but dares to think for himself? — because he wants to believe things, and dare not be satisfied with only believing that he ought to believe them?"

She paused, astonished.

"Ah, yes," he went on, "I hoped too much! What right had I to expect that you would understand me? What right, still more, to expect that you would stoop, any more than the rest of the world, to speak to me, as if I could become anything better than the wild hog I seem? Oh yes! — the chrysalis has no butterfly in it, of course!

Stamp on the ugly motionless thing! And yet — you look so beautiful and good! — are all my dreams to perish, about the Alrunen and prophet-maidens, how they charmed our old fighting, hunting forefathers into purity and sweet obedience among their Saxon forests? Has woman forgotten her mission — to look at the heart and have mercy, while cold man looks at the act and condemns? Do you, too, like the rest of mankind, think no-belief better than mis-belief; and smile on hypocrisy, lip-assent, practical Atheism, sooner than on the unpardonable sin of making a mistake? Will you, like the rest of this wise world, let a man's spirit rot asleep into the pit, if he will only lie quiet and not disturb your smooth respectabilities; but if he dares, in waking, to yawn in an unorthodox manner, knock him on the head at once, and 'break the bruised reed,' and 'quench the smoking flax'? And yet you churchgoers have 'renounced the world'!"

"What do you want, in Heaven's name?" asked Argemone, half terrified.

"I want *you* to tell me that. Here I am, with youth, health, strength, money, every blessing of life but one; and I am utterly miserable. I want some one to tell me what I want."

"Is it not that you want — religion?"

"I see hundreds who have what you call religion, with whom I should scorn to change my irreligion."

"But, Mr. Smith, are you not — are you not wicked? — They tell me so," said Argemone, with an effort. "And is that not the cause of your disease?"

Lancelot laughed.

"No, fairest prophetess, it is the disease itself. 'Why am I what I am, when I know more and more daily what I could be?' — That is the mystery; and my sins are the fruit, and not the root of it. Who will explain that?"

Argemone began, —

"The Church ——"

"Oh, Miss Lavington," cried he, impatiently, "will you, too, send me back to that cold abstraction? I came to you, however presumptuous, for living, human advice to a living, human heart; and will you pass off on me that Proteus-dream the Church, which in every man's mouth has a different meaning? In one book, meaning a method of education, only it has never been carried out; in another, a system of polity, — only it has never been realized; — now a set of words written in books, on whose meaning all are divided; now a body of men who are daily excommunicating each other as heretics and apostates; now a universal idea; now the narrowest and most exclusive of all parties. Really, before you ask me to hear the Church, I have a right to ask you to define what the Church is."

"Our Articles define it," said Argemone, drily.

"The 'Visible Church,' at least, it defines as 'a company of faithful men, in which,' etc. But how does it define the 'Invisible' one? And what does 'faithful' mean? What if I thought Cromwell and Pierre Leroux infinitely more faithful men in their way, and better members of the 'Invisible Church,' than the torturer-pedant Laud, or the facing bothways Protestant-Manichee Taylor?"

It was lucky for the life of young Love that the

discussion went no further: Argemone was becoming scandalized beyond all measure. But, happily, the colonel interposed, —

"Look here; tell me if you know for whom this sketch is meant?"

"Tregarva, the keeper: who can doubt?" answered they both at once.

"Has not Mellot succeeded perfectly?"

"Yes," said Lancelot. "But what wonder, with such a noble subject? What a grand benevolence is enthroned on that lofty forehead!"

"Oh, you would say so, indeed," interposed Honoria, "if you knew him! The stories that I could tell you about him! How he would go into cottages, read to sick people by the hour, dress the children, cook the food for them, as tenderly as any woman! I found out, last winter, if you will believe it, that he lived on bread and water, to give out of his own wages — which are barely twelve shillings a week — five shillings a week for more than two months to a poor laboring man, to prevent his going to the workhouse, and being parted from his wife and children."

"Noble, indeed!" said Lancelot. "I do not wonder now at the effect his conversation just now had on me."

"Has he been talking to you?" said Honoria, eagerly. "He seldom speaks to any one."

"He has to me; and so well, that were I sure that the poor were as ill off as he says, and that I had the power of altering the system a hair, I could find it in my heart to excuse all political grievance-mongers, and turn one myself."

Claude Mellot clapped his white woman-like hands.

"Bravo! Bravo! O wonderful conversion! Lancelot has at last discovered that, besides the 'glorious Past,' there is a Present worthy of his sublime notice! We may now hope, in time, that he will discover the existence of a Future!"

"But, Mr. Mellot," said Honoria, "why have you been so unfaithful to your original? why have you, like all artists, been trying to soften and refine on your model?"

"Because, my dear lady, we are bound to see everything in its ideal — not as it is, but as it ought to be, and will be, when the vices of this pitiful civilized world are exploded, and sanitary reform, and a variety of occupation, and harmonious education, let each man fulfil in body and soul the ideal which God embodied in him."

"Fourierist!" cried Lancelot, laughing. "But surely you never saw a face which had lost by wear less of the divine image? How thoroughly it exemplifies your great law of Protestant art, that 'the Ideal is best manifested in the Peculiar.' How classic, how independent of clime or race, is its bland, majestic self-possession! how thoroughly Norse its massive squareness!"

"And yet, as a Cornishman, he should be no Norseman."

"I beg your pardon! Like all noble races, the Cornish owe their nobleness to the impurity of their blood — to its perpetual loans from foreign veins. See how the serpentine curve of his nose, his long nostril, and protruding, sharp-cut lips, mark his share of Phœnician or Jewish blood! how Norse, again, that dome-shaped forehead! how Celtic those dark curls, that restless gray

eye, with its *swinden blicken*, like Von Troneg Hagen's in the 'Nibelungen Lied'!"

He turned: Honoria was devouring his words. He saw it, for he was in love, and young love makes man's senses as keen as woman's.

"Look! look at him now!" said Claude, in a low voice. "How he sits, with his hands on his knees, the enormous size of his limbs quite concealed by the careless grace, with his Egyptian face, like some dumb granite Memnon!"

"Only waiting," said Lancelot, "for the day-star to arise on him and awake him into voice."

He looked at Honoria as he spoke. She blushed angrily; and yet a sort of sympathy arose from that moment between Lancelot and herself.

Our hero feared he had gone too far, and tried to turn the subject off.

The smooth mill-head was alive with rising trout.

"What a huge fish leapt then!" said Lancelot, carelessly; "and close to the bridge, too!"

Honoria looked round, and uttered a piercing scream.

"Oh, my dog! my dog! Mops is in the river! That horrid gazelle has butted him in, and he'll be drowned!"

Alas! it was too true. There, a yard above the one open hatchway, through which the whole force of the stream was rushing, was the unhappy Mops, *alias* Scratch, *alias* Dirty Dick, *alias* Jack Sheppard, paddling, and sneezing, and winking, his little bald muzzle turned piteously upward to the sky.

"He will be drowned!" quoth the colonel.

There was no doubt of it; and so Mops thought, as, shivering and whining, he plied every leg, while the glassy current dragged him back and back, and Honoria sobbed like a child.

The colonel lay down on the bridge, and caught at him: his arm was a foot too short. In a moment the huge form of Tregarva plunged solemnly into the water, with a splash like seven salmon, and Mops was jerked out over the colonel's head high and dry on to the bridge.

"*You'll* be drowned, at least!" shouted the colonel, with an oath of Uncle Toby's own.

Tregarva saw his danger, made one desperate bound upward, and missed the bridge. The colonel caught at him, tore off a piece of his collar — the calm, solemn face of the keeper flashed past beneath him, and disappeared through the roaring gate.

They rushed to the other side of the bridge — caught one glimpse of a dark body fleeting and roaring down the foam-way. The colonel leapt the bridge-rail like a deer, rushed out along the buck-stage, tore off his coat, and sprung headlong into the boiling pool, "rejoicing in his might," as old Homer would say.

Lancelot, forgetting his crutches, was dashing after him, when he felt a soft hand clutching at his arm.

"Lancelot! Mr. Smith!" cried Argemone. "You shall not go! You are too ill — weak ——"

"A fellow-creature's life!"

"What is his life to yours?" she cried, in a tone of deep passion. And then, imperiously, "Stay here, I command you!"

The magnetic touch of her hand thrilled through

his whole frame. She had called him Lancelot! He shrank down, and stood spell-bound.

"Good heavens!" she cried; "look at my sister!"

Out on the extremity of the buck-stage (how she got there neither they nor she ever knew) crouched Honoria, her face idiotic with terror, while she stared with bursting eyes into the foam. A shriek of disappointment rose from her lips, as in a moment the colonel's weather-worn head reappeared above, looking for all the world like an old gray shiny-painted seal.

"Poof! tally-ho! Poof! poof! Heave me a piece of wood, Lancelot, my boy!" And he disappeared again.

They looked round, there was not a loose bit near. Claude ran off towards the house. Lancelot, desperate, seized the bridge-rail, tore it off by sheer strength, and hurled it far into the pool. Argemone saw it, and remembered it, like a true woman. Ay, be as Manichæan-sentimental as you will, fair ladies, physical prowess, that Eden-right of manhood, is sure to tell upon your hearts!

Again the colonel's grizzled head reappeared, — and, oh joy! beneath it a draggled knot of black curls. In another instant he had hold of the rail, and quietly floating down to the shallow, dragged the lifeless giant high and dry on a patch of gravel.

Honoria never spoke. She rose, walked quietly back along the beam, passed Argemone and Lancelot without seeing them, and firmly but hurriedly led the way round the pool-side.

Before they arrived at the bank, the colonel

had carried Tregarva to it. Lancelot and two or three workmen, whom his cries had attracted, lifted the body on to the meadow.

Honoria knelt quietly down on the grass, and watched, silent and motionless, the dead face, with her wide, awe-struck eyes.

"God bless her for a kind soul!" whispered the wan weather-beaten field drudges, as they crowded round the body.

"Get out of the way, my men!" quoth the colonel. "Too many cooks spoil the broth." And he packed off one here and another there for necessaries, and commenced trying every restorative means with the ready coolness of a practised surgeon; while Lancelot, whom he ordered about like a baby, gulped down a great choking lump of envy, and then tasted the rich delight of forgetting himself in admiring obedience to a real superior.

But there Tregarva lay lifeless, with folded hands, and a quiet satisfied smile, while Honoria watched and watched with parted lips, unconscious of the presence of every one.

Five minutes! — ten!

"Carry him to the house," said the colonel, in a despairing tone, after another attempt.

"He moves!" "No!" "He does!" "He breathes!" "Look at his eyelids!"

Slowly his eyes opened.

"Where am I? All gone? Sweet dreams — blessed dreams!"

His eye met Honoria's. One big deep sigh swelled to his lips and burst. She seemed to recollect herself, rose, passed her arm through Argemone's, and walked slowly away.

CHAPTER IV

AN "INGLORIOUS MILTON"

ARGEMONE, sweet prude, thought herself bound to read Honoria a lecture that night, on her reckless exhibition of feeling; but it profited little. The most consummate cunning could not have baffled Argemone's suspicions more completely than her sister's utter simplicity. She cried just as bitterly about Mops's danger as about the keeper's, and then laughed heartily at Argemone's solemnity; till at last, when pushed a little too hard, she broke out into something very like a passion, and told her sister, bitterly enough, that "she was not accustomed to see men drowned every day, and begged to hear no more about the subject." Whereat Argemone prudently held her tongue, knowing that under all Honoria's tenderness lay a volcano of passionate determination, which was generally kept down by her affections, but was just as likely to be maddened by them. And so this conversation only went to increase the unconscious estrangement between them, though they continued, as sisters will do, to lavish upon each other the most extravagant protestations of affection — vowing to live and die only for each other — and believing honestly, sweet souls, that they felt all they said; till real imperious Love came in, in one case of the two at least, shouldering all

other affections right and left; and then the two beauties discovered, as others do, that it is not so possible or reasonable as they thought for a woman to sacrifice herself and her lover for the sake of her sister or her friend.

Next morning Lancelot and the colonel started out to Tregarva's cottage, on a mission of inquiry. They found the giant propped up in bed with pillows, his magnificent features looking in their paleness more than ever like a granite Memnon. Before him lay an open Pilgrim's Progress, and a drawer filled with feathers and furs, which he was busily manufacturing into trout flies, reading as he worked. The room was filled with nets, guns, and keepers' tackle, while a well-filled shelf of books hung by the wall.

"Excuse my rising, gentlemen," he said, in his slow, staid voice, "but I am very weak, in spite of the Lord's goodness to me. You are very kind to think of coming to my poor cottage."

"Well, my man," said the colonel, "and how are you after your cold bath? You are the heaviest fish I ever landed!"

"Pretty well, thank God, and you, sir. I am in your debt, sir, for the dear life. How shall I ever repay you?"

"Repay, my good fellow? You would have done as much for me."

"May be; but you did not think of that when you jumped in; and no more must I in thanking you. God knows how a poor miner's son will ever reward you; but the mouse repaid the lion, says the story, and, at all events, I can pray for you. By the by, gentlemen, I hope you have brought up some trolling-tackle?"

"We came up to see you, and not to fish," said Lancelot, charmed with the stately courtesy of the man.

"Many thanks, gentlemen; but old Harry Verney was in here just now, and had seen a great jack strike, at the tail of the lower reeds. With this fresh wind he will run till noon; and you are sure of him with a dace. After that, he will not be up again on the shallows till sunset. He works the works of darkness, and comes not to the light, because his deeds are evil."

Lancelot laughed. "He does but follow his kind, poor fellow."

"No doubt, sir, no doubt; all the Lord's works are good: but it is a wonder why He should have made wasps, now, and blights, and vermin, and jack, and such evil-featured things, that carry spite and cruelty in their very faces — a great wonder. Do you think, sir, all those creatures were in the Garden of Eden?"

"You are getting too deep for me," said Lancelot. "But why trouble your head about fishing?"

"I beg your pardon for preaching to you, sir. I'm sure I forgot myself. If you will let me, I'll get up and get you a couple of bait from the stew. You'll do us keepers a kindness, and prevent sin, sir, if you'll catch him. The squire will swear sadly — the Lord forgive him — if he hears of a pike in the trout-runs. I'll get up, if I may trouble you to go into the next room a minute."

"Lie still, for Heaven's sake. Why bother your head about pike now?"

"It is my business, sir, and I am paid for it, and I must do it thoroughly; — and abide in the calling wherein I am called," he added, in a sadder tone.

"You seem to be fond enough of it, and to know enough about it, at all events," said the colonel, "tying flies here on a sick-bed."

"As for being fond of it, sir — those creatures of the water teach a man many lessons; and when I tie flies, I earn books."

"How then?"

"I send my flies all over the country, sir, to Salisbury and Hungerford, and up to Winchester, even; and the money buys me many a wise book — all my delight is in reading; perhaps so much the worse for me."

"So much the better, say," answered Lancelot, warmly. "I 'll give you an order for a couple of pounds' worth of flies at once."

"The Lord reward you, sir," answered the giant.

"And you shall make me the same quantity," said the colonel. "You can make salmon-flies?"

"I made a lot by pattern for an Irish gent, sir."

"Well, then, we 'll send you some Norway patterns, and some golden pheasant and parrot feathers. We 're going to Norway this summer, you know, Lancelot ——"

Tregarva looked up with a quaint, solemn hesitation.

"If you please, gentlemen, you 'll forgive a man's conscience."

"Well?"

"But I 'd not like to be a party to the making of Norway flies."

"Here 's a Protectionist, with a vengeance!" laughed the colonel. "Do you want to keep all us fishermen in England? eh? to fee English keepers?"

"No, sir. There 's pretty fishing in Norway, I hear, and poor folk that want money more than we keepers. God knows we get too much — we that hang about great houses and serve great folks' pleasure — you toss the money down our throats, without our deserving it; and we spend it as we get it — a deal too fast — while hard-working laborers are starving."

"And yet you would keep us in England?"

"Would God I could!"

"Why then, my good fellow?" asked Lancelot, who was getting intensely interested with the calm, self-possessed earnestness of the man, and longed to draw him out.

The colonel yawned.

"Well, I 'll go and get myself a couple of bait. Don't you stir, my good parson-keeper. Down charge, I say! Odd if I don't find a bait-net, and a rod for myself, under the verandah."

"You will, colonel. I remember, now, I set it there last morning; but the water washed many things out of my brains, and some things into them — and I forgot it like a goose."

"Well, good-bye, and lie still. I know what a drowning is, and more than one. A day and a night have I been in the deep, like the man in the good book; and bed is the best of medicine for a ducking;" and the colonel shook him kindly by the hand and disappeared.

Lancelot sat down by the keeper's bed.

"You 'll get those fish-hooks into your trousers, sir; and this is a poor place to sit down in."

"I want you to say your say out, friend, fish-hooks or none."

The keeper looked warily at the door, and when

the colonel had passed the window, balancing the trolling-rod on his chin, and whistling merrily, he began, —

"'A day and a night have I been in the deep!' — and brought back no more from it! And yet the Psalms say how they that go down to the sea in ships see the works of the Lord! — If the Lord has opened their eyes to see them, that must mean ——"

Lancelot waited.

"What a gallant gentleman that is, and a valiant man of war, I 'll warrant, — and to have seen all the wonders he has, and yet to be wasting his span of life like that!"

Lancelot's heart smote him.

"One would think, sir —— You 'll pardon me for speaking out." And the noble face worked, as he murmured to himself, "When ye are brought before kings and princes for my name's sake. — I dare not hold my tongue, sir. I am as one risen from the dead," — and his face flashed up into sudden enthusiasm, — "and woe to me if I speak not. Oh, why, why are you gentlemen running off to Norway, and foreign parts, whither God has not called you! Are there no graves in Egypt, that you must go out to die in the wilderness?"

Lancelot, quite unaccustomed to the language of the Dissenting poor, felt keenly the bad taste of the allusion.

"What can you mean?" he asked.

"Pardon me, sir, if I cannot speak plainly; but are there not temptations enough here in England that you must go to waste all your gifts, your scholarship, and your rank, far away there out of the sound of a church-going bell? I don't deny

it's a great temptation. I have read of Norway wonders in a book of one Miss Martineau, with a strange name."

"Feats on the Fiord?"

"That's it, sir. Her books are grand books to set one a-thinking; but she don't seem to see the Lord in all things, does she, sir?"

Lancelot parried the question.

"You are wandering a little from the point."

"So I am, and thank you for the rebuke. There's where I find you scholars have the advantage of us poor fellows, who pick up knowledge as we can. Your book-learning makes you stick to the point so much better. You are taught how to think. After all — God forgive me if I'm wrong! but I sometimes think that there must be more good in that human wisdom, and philosophy falsely so called, than we Wesleyans hold. Oh, sir, what a blessing is a good education! What you gentlemen might do with it, if you did but see your own power! Are there no fish in England, sir, to be caught? precious fish, with immortal souls? And is there not One who has said, 'Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men'?"

"Would you have us all turn parsons?"

"Is no one to do God's work except the parson, sir? Oh, the game that you rich folks have in your hands, if you would but play it! Such a man as Colonel Bracebridge now, with the tongue of the serpent, who can charm any living soul he likes to his will, as a stoat charms a rabbit. Or you, sir, with your tongue: — you have charmed one precious creature already. I can see it: though neither of you know it, yet I know it."

Lancelot started, and blushed crimson.

"Oh, that I had your tongue, sir!" And the keeper blushed crimson, too, and went on hastily, —

"But why could you not charm all alike? Do not the poor want you as well as the rich?"

"What can I do for the poor, my good fellow? And what do they want? Have they not houses, work, a church, and schools, — and poor-rates to fall back on?"

The keeper smiled sadly.

"To fall back on, indeed! and down on, too. At all events, you rich might help to make Christians of them, and men of them. For I'm beginning to fancy strangely, in spite of all the preachers say, that, before ever you can make them Christians, you must make them men and women."

"Are they not so already?"

"Oh, sir, go and see! How can a man be a man in those crowded styes, sleeping packed together like Irish pigs in a steamer, never out of the fear of want, never knowing any higher amusement than the beershop? Those old Greeks and Romans, as I read, were more like men than half our English laborers. Go and see! Ask that sweet heavenly angel, Miss Honoria,"— and the keeper again blushed, — "and she, too, will tell you. I think sometimes if she had been born and bred like her father's tenants' daughters, to sleep where they sleep, and hear the talk they hear, and see the things they see, what would she have been now? We must n't think of it." And the keeper turned his head away, and fairly burst into tears.

Lancelot was moved.

"Are the poor very immoral, then?"

"You ask the rector, sir, how many children hereabouts are born within six months of the wedding-day. None of them marry, sir, till the devil forces them. There's no sadder sight than a laborer's wedding nowadays. You never see the parents come with them. They just get another couple, that are keeping company, like themselves, and come sneaking into church, looking all over as if they were ashamed of it — and well they may be!"

"Is it possible?"

"I say, sir, that God makes you gentlemen, gentlemen, that you may see into these things. You give away your charities kindly enough, but you don't know the folks you give to. If a few of you would but be like the blessed Lord, and stoop to go out of the road, just behind the hedge, for once, among the publicans and harlots! Were you ever at a country fair, sir? Though I suppose I am rude for fancying that you could demean yourself to such company."

"I should not think it demeaning myself," said Lancelot, smiling; "but I never was at one, and I should like for once to see the real manners of the poor."

"I'm no haunter of such places myself, God knows; but — I see you're in earnest now — will you come with me, sir, — for once? for God's sake and the poor's sake?"

"I shall be delighted."

"Not after you've been there, I am afraid."

"Well, it's a bargain when you are recovered. And, in the meantime, the squire's orders are, that you lie by for a few days to rest; and Miss Honoria's, too; and she has sent you down some wine."

"She thought of me, did she?" and the still sad face blazed out radiant with pleasure, and then collapsed as suddenly into deep melancholy.

Lancelot saw it, but said nothing; and shaking him heartily by the hand, had his shake returned by an iron grasp, and slipped silently out of the cottage.

The keeper lay still, gazing on vacancy. Once he murmured to himself:

"Through strange ways — strange ways — and though he let them wander out of the road in the wilderness; — we know how that goes on ——"

And then he fell into a mixed meditation — perhaps into a prayer.

CHAPTER V

A SHAM IS WORSE THAN NOTHING

AT last, after Lancelot had waited long in vain, came his cousin's answer to the letter which I gave in my second chapter.

"You are not fair to me, good cousin . . . but I have given up expecting fairness from Protestants. I do not say that the front and the back of my head have different makers, any more than that doves and vipers have . . . and yet I kill the viper when I meet him . . . and so do you. . . . And yet, are we not taught that our animal nature is throughout equally viperous? . . . The Catholic Church, at least, so teaches. . . . She believes in the corruption of human nature. She believes in the literal meaning of Scripture. She has no wish to paraphrase away St. Paul's awful words, that "in his flesh dwelleth no good thing," by the unscientific euphemisms of "fallen nature" or "corrupt humanity." The boasted discovery of phrenologists, that thought, feeling, and passion reside in this material brain and nerves of ours, has ages ago been anticipated by her simple faith in the letter of Scripture; a faith which puts to shame the irreverent vagueness and fantastic private interpretations of those who make an idol of that very letter which they dare not take literally, because it makes against their self-willed theories. . . .

"And so you call me *douce* and meek? . . . You should remember what I once was, Lancelot . . . I, at

least, have not forgotten . . . I have not forgotten how that very animal nature, on the possession of which you seem to pride yourself, was in me only the parent of remorse. . . . I know it too well not to hate and fear it. Why do you reproach me, if I try to abjure it, and cast away the burden which I am too weak to bear? I am weak — Would you have me say that I am strong? Would you have me try to be a Prometheus, while I am longing to be once more an infant on a mother's breast? Let me alone . . . I am a weary child, who knows nothing, can do nothing, except lose its way in arguings and reasonings, and 'find no end, in wandering mazes lost.' Will you reproach me, because when I see a soft cradle lying open for me . . . with a Virgin Mother's face smiling down all woman's love about it . . . I long to crawl into it, and sleep awhile? I want loving, indulgent sympathy . . . I want detailed, explicit guidance . . . Have you, then, found so much of them in our former creed, that you forbid me to go to seek them elsewhere, in the Church which not only professes them as an organized system, but practises them . . . as you would find in your first half-hour's talk with one of her priests . . . true priests . . . who know the heart of man, and pity, and console, and bear for their flock the burdens which they cannot bear themselves? You ask me who will teach a fast young man? . . . I answer, the Jesuit. Ay, start and sneer, at that delicate woman-like tenderness, that subtle instinctive sympathy, which you have never felt . . . which is as new to me, alas, as it would be to you! For if there be none nowadays to teach such as you, who is there who will teach such as me? Do not fancy that I have not craved and searched for teachers . . . I went to one party long ago, and they commanded me, as the price of their sympathy, even of anything but their denunciations, to ignore, if not to abjure, all the very points on which I came for

light — my love for the beautiful and the symbolic — my desire to consecrate and Christianize it — my longing for a human voice to tell me with authority that I was forgiven — my desire to find some practical and palpable communion between myself and the saints of old. They told me to cast away, as an accursed chaos, a thousand years of Christian history, and believe that the devil had been for ages . . . just the ages I thought noblest, most faithful, most interpenetrated with the thought of God . . . triumphant over that church with which He had promised to be till the end of the world. No . . . by the by, they made two exceptions — of their own choosing. One in favor of the Albigenses . . . who seemed to me, from the original documents, to have been very profligate Infidels, of whom the world was well rid . . . and the Piedmontese . . . poor, simple, ill-used folk enough, but who certainly cannot be said to have exercised much influence on the destinies of mankind . . . and all the rest was chaos and the pit. There never had been, never would be, a kingdom of God on earth, but only a few scattered individuals, each selfishly intent on the salvation of his own soul — without organization, without unity, without common purpose, without even a masonic sign whereby to know one another when they chanced to meet . . . except Shibboleths which the hypocrite could ape, and virtues which the heathen have performed . . . Would *you* have had me accept such a "Philosophy of History"?

"And then I went to another school . . . or rather wandered up and down between those whom I have just described, and those who boast on their side prescriptive right, and apostolic succession . . . and I found that their ancient charter went back — just three hundred years . . . and there derived its transmitted virtue, it seemed to me, by something very like obtaining goods on false pretences, from the very church which it now

anathematizes. Disheartened, but not hopeless, I asked how it was that the priesthood, whose hands bestowed the grace of ordination, could not withdraw it . . . whether, at least, the schismatic did not forfeit it by the very act of schism . . . and instead of any real answer to that fearful spiritual dilemma, they set me down to folios of Nag's head controversies . . . and myths of an independent British Church, now represented, strangely enough, by those Saxons who, after its wicked refusal to communicate with them, exterminated it with fire and sword, and derived its own order from St. Gregory . . . and decisions of mythical old councils (held by bishops of a different faith and practice from their own), from which I was to pick the one point which made for them, and omit the nine which made against them, while I was to believe, by a stretch of imagination . . . or common honesty . . . which I leave you to conceive, that the Church of Syria in the fourth century was, in doctrine, practice, and constitution, like that of England in the nineteenth? . . . And what was I to gain by all this? . . . For the sake of what was I to strain logic and conscience? To believe myself a member of the same body with all the Christian nations of the earth? — to be able to hail the Frenchman, the Italian, the Spaniard, as a brother — to have hopes even of the German and the Swede . . . if not in this life, still in the life to come? No . . . to be able to sit apart from all Christendom in the exclusive pride of insular Pharisaism; to claim for the modern littleness of England the infallibility which I denied to the primeval mother of Christendom, not to enlarge my communion to the Catholic, but excommunicate, to all practical purposes, over and above the Catholics, all other Protestants except my own sect . . . or rather, in practice, except my own party in my own sect. . . . And this was believing in one Catholic and Apostolic church! . . . this was to be my share of the

communion of saints! And these were the theories which were to satisfy a soul which longed for a kingdom of God on earth, which felt that unless the highest of His promises are a mythic dream, there must be some system on the earth commissioned to fulfil those promises; some authority divinely appointed to regenerate, and rule, and guide the lives of men, and the destinies of nations; who must go mad, unless he finds that history is not a dreary aimless procession of lost spirits descending into the pit, or that the salvation of millions does not depend on an obscure and controverted hair's breadth of ecclesiastic law.

"I have tried them both, Lancelot, and found them wanting; and now but one road remains. . . . Home, to the fountain-head; to the mother of all the churches whose fancied cruelty to her children can no more destroy her motherhood, than their confest rebellion can. . . . Shall I not hear her voice, when she, and she alone cries to me, 'I have authority and commission from the King of kings to regenerate the world. History is a chaos, only because mankind has been ever rebelling against me, its lawful ruler . . . and yet not a chaos . . . for I still stand, and grow rooted on the rock of ages, and under my boughs are fowl of every wing. I alone have been and am consistent, progressive, expansive, welcoming every race and intellect and character into its proper place in my great organism . . . meeting alike the wants of the king and the beggar, the artist and the devotee . . . there is free room for all within my heaven-wide bosom. Infallibility is not the exclusive heritage of one proud and ignorant Island, but of a system which knows no distinction of language, race, or clime. The communion of saints is not a bygone tale, for my saints, redeemed from every age and every nation under heaven, still live, and love, and help and intercede. The union of heaven and earth is not a

barbaric myth; for I have still my miracles, my Host, my exorcism, my absolution. The present rule of God is still, as ever, a living reality; for I rule in His name, and fulfil all His will.'

"How can I turn away from such a voice? What if some of her doctrines may startle my untutored and ignorant understanding? . . . If she is the appointed teacher, she will know best what truths to teach. . . . The disciple is not above his master . . . or wise in requiring him to demonstrate the abstrusest problems . . . spiritual problems, too . . . before he allows his right to teach the elements. Humbly I must enter the temple porch; gradually and trustfully proceed with my initiation. . . . When that is past, and not before . . . shall I be a fit judge of the mysteries of the inner shrine.

"There . . . I have written a long letter . . . with my own heart's blood. . . . Think over it well, before you despise it. . . . And if you can refute it for me, and sweep the whole away like a wild dream when one awakes, none will be more thankful — paradoxical as it may seem — than your unhappy Cousin."

And Lancelot did consider that letter, and answered it as follows:

"It is a relief to me at least, dear Luke, that you are going to Rome in search of a great idea, and not merely from selfish superstitious terror (as I should call it) about the 'salvation of your soul.' And it is a new and very important thought to me, that Rome's scheme of this world, rather than of the next, forms her chief allurement. But as for that flesh and spirit question, or the apostolic succession one either; all you seem to me, as a looker on, to have logically proved, is that Protestants, orthodox and unorthodox, must be a little more scientific and careful in their use of the terms. But as

for adopting your use of them, and the consequences thereof — you must pardon me, and, I suspect, them too. Not that. Anything but that. Whatever is right, that is wrong. Better to be inconsistent in truth, than consistent in a mistake. And your Romish idea of man is a mistake — utterly wrong and absurd — except in the one requirement of righteousness and godliness, which Protestants and heathen philosophers have required and do require just as much as you. My dear Luke, your ideal men and women won't do — for they are not men and women at all, but what you call 'saints.' . . . Your Calendar, your historic list of the earth's worthies, won't do — not they, but others, are the people who have brought Humanity thus far. I don't deny that there are great souls among them; Beckets, and Hugh Grostêtes, and Elizabeths of Hungary. But you are the last people to praise them, for you don't understand them. Thierry honors Thomas à Becket more than all Canonizations and worshippers do, because he does see where the man's true greatness lay, and you don't. Why, you may hunt all Surius for such a biography of a mediæval worthy as Carlyle has given of your Abbot Samson. I have read, or tried to read your Surius, and Alban Butler, and so forth — and they seemed to me bats and asses — One really pitied the poor saints and martyrs for having such blind biographers — such dunghill cocks, who overlooked the pearl of real human love and nobleness in them, in their greediness to snatch up and parade the rotten chaff of superstition, and self-torture, and spiritual dyspepsia, which had overlaid it. My dear fellow, that Calendar ruins your cause — you are *sacrés aristocrates* — kings and queens, bishops and virgins by the hundred at one end; a beggar or two at the other; and but one real human lay St. Homobonus to fill up the great gulf between — A pretty list to allure the English middle classes, or the Lancashire working-men! —

Almost as charmingly suited to England as the present free, industrious, enlightened, and moral state of that Eternal City, which has been blest with the visible presence and peculiar rule, temporal as well as spiritual, too, of your Dalai Lama. His pills do not seem to have had much practical effect there. . . . My good Luke, till he can show us a little better specimen of the kingdom of Heaven organized and realized on earth, in the country which does belong to him, soil and people, body and soul, we must decline his assistance in realizing that kingdom in countries which don't belong to him. If the state of Rome don't show his idea of man and society to be a rotten lie, what proof would you have? . . . perhaps the charming results of a century of Jesuitocracy, as they were represented on a French stage in the year 1793? I can't answer his arguments, you see, or yours either; I am an Englishman, and not a controversialist. The only answer I give is John Bull's old dumb instinctive 'Everlasting No!' which he will stand by, if need be, with sharp shot and cold steel — 'Not that; anything but that. No kingdom of Heaven at all for us, if the kingdom of Heaven is like that. No heroes at all for us, if their heroism is to consist in their being not-men. Better no society at all, but only a competitive wild-beast's den, than a sham society. Better no faith, no hope, no love, no God, than shams thereof.' I take my stand on fact and nature; you may call them idols and phantoms; I say they need be so no longer to any man, since Bacon has taught us to discover the Eternal Laws under the outward phenomena. Here on blank materialism will I stand, and testify against all Religions and Gods whatsoever, if they must needs be like that Roman religion, that Roman God. I don't believe they need — not I. But if they need, they must go. We cannot have a *Deus quidam deceptor*. If there be a God, these trees and stones, these beasts and

birds must be His will, whatever else is not. My body, and brain, and faculties, and appetites must be His will, whatever else is not. Whatsoever I can do with them in accordance with the constitution of them and nature must be His will, whatever else is not. Those laws of Nature must reveal Him, and be revealed by Him, whatever else is not. Man's scientific conquest of nature must be one phase of His Kingdom on Earth, whatever else is not. I don't deny that there are spiritual laws which man is meant to obey — How can I, who feel in my own daily and inexplicable unhappiness the fruits of having broken them? — But I do say, that those spiritual laws must be in perfect harmony with every fresh physical law which we discover: that they cannot be intended to compete self-destructively with each other; that the spiritual cannot be intended to be perfected by ignoring or crushing the physical, unless God is a deceiver, and His universe a self-contradiction. And by this test alone will I try all theories, and dogmas, and spiritualities whatsoever — Are they in accordance with the laws of nature? And therefore when your party compare sneeringly Romish sanctity and English civilization, I say, 'Take you the sanctity, and give me the civilization!' The one may be a dream, for it is unnatural; the other cannot be, for it is natural; and not an evil in it at which you sneer but is discovered, day by day, to be owing to some infringement of the laws of nature. When *we* 'draw bills on nature,' as Carlyle says, 'she honors them,' — our ships do sail; our mills do work; our doctors do cure; our soldiers do fight. And she does not honor yours; for your Jesuits have, by their own confession, to lie, to swindle, to get even man to accept theirs for them. So give me the political economist, the sanitary reformer, the engineer; and take your saints and virgins, relics and miracles. The spinning-jenny and the railroad, Cunard's liners and the

electric telegraph, are to me, if not to you, signs that we are, on some points at least, in harmony with the universe; that there is a mighty spirit working among us, who cannot be your anarchic and destroying devil, and therefore may be the ordering and creating God."

Which of them do you think, reader, had most right on his side?

CHAPTER VI

VOGUE LA GALÈRE

LANCELOT was now so far improved in health as to return to his little cottage *ornée*. He gave himself up freely to his new passion. With his comfortable fortune and good connections, the future seemed bright and possible enough as to circumstances. He knew that Argemone felt for him; how much it seemed presumptuous even to speculate, and as yet no golden-visaged meteor had arisen portentous in his amatory zodiac. No rich man had stepped in to snatch, in spite of all his own flocks and herds, at the poor man's own ewe-lamb, and set him barking at all the world, as many a poor lover has to do in defence of his morsel of enjoyment, now turned into a mere bone of contention and loadstone for all hungry kites and crows.

All that had to be done was to render himself worthy of her, and in doing so, to win her. And now he began to feel more painfully his ignorance of society, of practical life, and the outward present. He blamed himself angrily for having, as he now thought, wasted his time on ancient histories and foreign travels, while he neglected the living wonderful present, which weltered daily round him, every face embodying a living soul. For now he began to feel that those faces

did hide living souls; formerly he had half believed — he had tried, but from laziness, to make himself wholly believe — that they were all empty masks, phantasies, without interest or significance for him. But, somehow, in the light of his new love for Argemone, the whole human race seemed glorified, brought nearer, endeared to him. So it must be. He had spoken of a law wider than he thought in his fancy, that the angels might learn love for all by love for an individual. Do we not all learn love so? Is it not the first touch of the mother's bosom which awakens in the infant's heart that spark of affection which is hereafter to spread itself out towards every human being, and to lose none of its devotion for its first object, as it expands itself to innumerable new ones? Is it not by love, too, — by looking into loving human eyes, by feeling the care of loving hands, — that the infant first learns that there exist other beings beside itself? — that every body which it sees expresses a heart and will like its own? Be sure of it. Be sure that to have found the key to one heart is to have found the key to all; that truly to love is truly to know; and truly to love one, is the first step towards truly loving all who bear the same flesh and blood with the beloved. Like children, we must dress up even our unseen future in stage properties borrowed from the tried and palpable present, ere we can look at it without horror. We fear and hate the utterly unknown, and it only. Even pain we hate only when we cannot *know* it; when we can only feel it, without explaining it, and making it harmonize with our notions of our own deserts and destiny. And as

for human beings, there surely it stands true, wherever else it may not, that all knowledge is love, and all love knowledge; that even with the meanest, we cannot gain a glimpse into their inward trials and struggles, without an increase of sympathy and affection.

Whether he reasoned thus or not, Lancelot found that his new interest in the working classes was strangely quickened by his passion. It seemed the shortest and clearest way toward a practical knowledge of the present. "Here," he said to himself, "in the investigation of existing relations between poor and rich, I shall gain more real acquaintance with English society, than by dawdling centuries in exclusive drawing-rooms."

The inquiry had not yet presented itself to him as a duty; perhaps so much the better, that it might be the more thoroughly a free-will offering of love. At least it opened a new field of amusement and knowledge; it promised him new studies of human life; and as he lay on his sofa and let his thoughts flow, Tregarva's dark revelations began to mix themselves with dreams about the regeneration of the Whitford poor, and those again with dreams about the heiress of Whitford; and many a luscious scene and noble plan rose brightly detailed in his exuberant imagination. For Lancelot, like all born artists, could only think in a concrete form. He never worked out a subject without embodying it in some set oration, dialogue, or dramatic castle in the air.

But the more he dreamt, the more he felt that a material beauty of flesh and blood required a material house, baths, and boudoirs, conserva-

tories, and carriages; a safe material purse, and fixed material society; law and order, and the established framework of society, gained an importance in his eyes which they had never had before.

"Well," he said to himself, "I am turning quite practical and auld-warld. Those old Greeks were not so far wrong when they said that what made men citizens, patriots, heroes, was the love of wedded wife and child."

"Wedded wife and child!" — He shrank in from the daring of the delicious thought, as if he had intruded without invitation into a hidden sanctuary, and looked round for a book to drive away the dazzling picture. But even there his thoughts were haunted by Argemone's face, and

> "When his regard
> Was raised by intense pensiveness, two eyes,
> Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
> And seemed, with their serene and azure smiles,
> To beckon him."

He took up, with a new interest, "Chartism," which alone of all Mr. Carlyle's works he had hitherto disliked, because his own luxurious day-dreams had always flowed in such sad discord with the terrible warnings of the modern seer, and his dark vistas of starvation, crime, neglect, and discontent.

"Well," he said to himself, as he closed the book, "I suppose it is good for us easy-going ones now and then to face the possibility of a change. Gold has grown on my back as feathers do on geese, without my own will or deed; but considering that gold, like feathers, is equally

useful to those who have and those who have not, why, it is worth while for the goose to remember that he may possibly one day be plucked. And what remains? 'Io,' as Medea says. . . . But Argemone?" . . . And Lancelot felt, for the moment, as conservative as the tutelary genius of all special constables.

As the last thought passed through his brain, Bracebridge's little mustang slouched past the window, ridden (without a saddle) by a horseman whom there was no mistaking, for no one but the immaculate colonel, the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, dared to go about the country "such a figure." A minute afterwards he walked in, in a student's felt hat, a ragged heather-colored coatee, and old white "regulation drills," shrunk half-way up his legs, a pair of embroidered Indian moccasins, and an enormous meerschaum at his button-hole.

"Where have you been this last week?"

"Over head and ears in Young England, till I fled to you for a week's common sense. A glass of cider, for mercy's sake, 'to take the taste of it out of my mouth,' as Bill Sykes has it."

"Where have you been staying?"

"With young Lord Vieuxbois, among high art and painted glass, spade farms, and model smell-traps, rubricalities and sanitary reforms, and all other inventions, possible and impossible, for 'stretching the old formula to meet the new fact,' as your favorite prophet says."

"Till the old formula cracks under the tension."

"And cracks its devotees, too, I think. Here comes the cider!"

"But, my dear fellow, you must not laugh at

all this. Young England or Peelite, this is all right and noble. What a yet unspoken poetry there is in that very sanitary reform! It is the great fact of the age. We shall have men arise and write epics on it, when they have learnt that 'to the pure all things are pure,' and that science and usefulness contain a divine element, even in their lowest appliances."

"Write one yourself, and call it the 'Chadwickiad.'"

"Why not?

'Smells and the Man I sing.'

There's a beginning at once. Why don't *you* rather, with your practical power, turn sanitary reformer — the only true soldier — and conquer those real devils and 'natural enemies' of Englishmen, carbonic acid and sulphuretted hydrogen?"

"*Ce n'est pas mon métier*, my dear fellow. I am miserably behind the age. People are getting so cursedly in earnest nowadays, that I shall have to bolt to the backwoods to amuse myself in peace; or else sham dumb as the monkeys do, lest folks should find out that I'm rational, and set me to work."

Lancelot laughed and sighed.

"But how on earth do you contrive to get on so well with men with whom you have not an idea in common!"

"*Savoir faire*, O infant Hercules! own daddy to *savoir vivre*. I am a good listener; and, therefore, the most perfect, because the most silent, of flatterers. When they talk Puginesquery, I stick my head on one side attentively, and 'think the

more,' like the lady's parrot. I have been all the morning looking over a set of drawings for my lord's new chapel; and every soul in the party fancies me a great antiquary, just because I have been retailing to B as my own everything that A told me the moment before."

"I envy you your tact, at all events."

"Why the deuce should you? You may rise in time to something better than tact; to what the good book, I suppose, means by 'wisdom.' Young geniuses like you, who have been green enough to sell your souls to 'truth,' must not meddle with tact, unless you wish to fare as the donkey did when he tried to play lap-dog."

"At all events, I would sooner remain cub till they run me down and eat me, than give up speaking my mind," said Lancelot. "Fool I may be, but the devil himself sha'n't make me knave."

"Quite proper. On two thousand a year a man can afford to be honest. Kick out lustily right and left! — After all, the world is like a spaniel; the more you beat it, the better it likes you — if you have money. Only don't kick too hard; for, after all, it has a hundred million pair of shins to your one."

"Don't fear that I shall run a-muck against society just now. I am too thoroughly out of my own good books. I have been for years laughing at Young England, and yet its little finger is thicker than my whole body, for it is trying to do something; and I, alas, am doing utterly nothing. I should be really glad to take a lesson of these men and their plans for social improvement."

"You will have a fine opportunity this evening. Don't you dine at Minchampstead?"

"Yes. Do you?"

"Mr. Jingle dines everywhere, except at home. Will you take me over in your trap?"

"Done. But whom shall we meet there?"

"The Lavingtons, and Vieuxbois, and Vaurien, and a parson or two, I suppose. But between Saint Venus and Vieuxbois you may soon learn enough to make you a sadder man, if not a wiser one."

"Why not a wiser one? Sadder than now I cannot be; or less wise, God knows."

The colonel looked at Lancelot with one of those kindly thoughtful smiles, which came over him whenever his better child's heart could bubble up through the thick crust of worldliness.

"My young friend, you have been a little too much on the stilts heretofore. Take care that, now you are off them, you don't lie down and sleep, instead of walking honestly on your legs. Have faith in yourself; pick these men's brains, and all men's. You can do it. Say to yourself boldly, as the false prophet in India said to the missionary, 'I have fire enough in my stomach to burn up' a dozen stucco and filigree reformers and 'assimilate their ashes into the bargain, like one of Liebig's cabbages.'"

"How can I have faith in myself, when I am playing traitor to myself every hour in the day? And yet faith in something I must have: in woman, perhaps."

"Never!" said the colonel, energetically. "In anything but woman! She must be led, not leader. If you love a woman, make her have

faith in *you.* If you lean on her, you will ruin yourself, and her as well."

Lancelot shook his head. There was a pause.

"After all, colonel, I think there must be a meaning in those old words our mothers used to teach us about 'having faith in God.'"

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"*Quien sabe?* said the Spanish girl, when they asked her who was her child's father. But here comes my kit on a clod's back, and it is time to dress for dinner."

So to the dinner-party they went.

Lord Minchampstead was one of the few noblemen Lancelot had ever met who had aroused in him a thorough feeling of respect. He was always and in all things a strong man. Naturally keen, ready, business-like, daring, he had carved out his own way through life, and opened his oyster — the world, neither with sword nor pen, but with steam and cotton. His father was Mr. Obadiah Newbroom, of the well-known manufacturing firm of Newbroom, Stag, and Playforall. A stanch Dissenter himself, he saw with a slight pang his son Thomas turn Churchman as soon as the young man had worked his way up to be the real head of the firm. But this was the only sorrow which Thomas Newbroom, now Lord Minchampstead, had ever given his father. "I stood behind a loom myself, my boy, when I began life; and you must do with great means what I did with little ones. I have made a gentleman of you, you must make a nobleman of yourself." Those were almost the last words of the stern, thrifty, old Puritan craftsman, and his son never forgot them. From a mill-owner he

grew to coal-owner, ship-owner, banker, railway director, money-lender to kings and princes; and last of all, as the summit of his own and his compeer's ambition, to land-owner. He had half a dozen estates in as many different counties. He had added house to house, and field to field; and at last bought Minchampstead Park and ten thousand acres, for two-thirds its real value, from that enthusiastic sportsman Lord Peu de Cervelle, whose family had come in with the Conqueror, and gone out with George IV. So, at least, they always said; but it was remarkable that their name could never be traced farther back than the dissolution of the monasteries: and calumnious Dryasdusts would sometimes insolently father their title on James I. and one of his batches of bought peerages. But let the dead bury their dead. There was now a new lord in Minchampstead; and every country Caliban was finding, to his disgust, that he had "got a new master," and must perforce "be a new man." Oh! how the squires swore and the farmers chuckled, when the "Parvenu" sold the Minchampstead hounds, and celebrated his 1st of September by exterminating every hare and pheasant on the estate! How the farmers swore and the laborers chuckled when he took all the cottages into his own hands and rebuilt them, set up a first-rate industrial school, gave every man a pig and a garden, and broke up all the commons "to thin the labor-market." Oh, how the laborers swore and the farmers chuckled, when he put up steam-engines on all his farms, refused to give away a farthing in alms, and enforced the new Poor-law to the very letter. How the country tradesmen swore, when he called

them "a pack of dilatory jobbers," and announced his intention of employing only London workmen for his improvements. Oh! how they all swore together (behind his back, of course, for his dinners were worth eating), and the very ladies said naughty words, when the stern political economist proclaimed at his own table that "he had bought Minchampstead for merely commercial purposes, as a profitable investment of capital, and he would see that, whatever else it did, it should *pay*."

But the new lord heard of all the hard words with a quiet self-possessed smile. He had formed his narrow theory of the universe, and he was methodically and conscientiously carrying it out. True, too often, like poor Keats's merchant brothers, —

> "Half-ignorant, he turned an easy wheel,
> Which set sharp racks at work to pinch and peel."

But of the harm which he did he was unconscious; in the good which he did he was consistent and indefatigable; infinitely superior, with all his defects, to the ignorant, extravagant do-nothing Squire Lavingtons around him. At heart, however Mammoth-blinded, he was kindly and upright. A man of a stately presence; a broad, honest north-country face; a high square forehead, bland and unwrinkled. I sketch him here once for all, because I have no part for him after this scene in my *corps de ballet.*

Lord Minchampstead had many reasons for patronizing Lancelot. In the first place, he had a true eye for a strong man wherever he met him; in the next place, Lancelot's uncle, the banker,

was a stanch Whig ally of his in the House. "In the rotten-borough times, Mr. Smith," he once said to Lancelot, "we could have made a senator of you at once; but, for the sake of finality, we were forced to relinquish that organ of influence. The Tories had abused it, really, a little too far; and now we can only make a commissioner of you — which, after all, is a more useful post, and a more lucrative one." But Lancelot had not as yet "Galliolized," as the Irish schoolmaster used to call it, and cared very little to play a political ninth fiddle.

The first thing which caught his eyes as he entered the drawing-room before dinner was Argemone listening in absorbed reverence to her favorite vicar, — a stern, prim, close-shaven, dyspeptic man, with a meek, cold smile, which might have become a cruel one. He watched and watched in vain, hoping to catch her eye; but no — there she stood, and talked and listened——

"Ah," said Bracebridge, smiling, "it is in vain, Smith! When did you know a woman leave the Church for one of us poor laymen?"

"Good heavens!" said Lancelot, impatiently, "why will they make such fools of themselves with clergymen?"

"They are quite right. They always like the strong men — the fighters and the workers. In Voltaire's time they all ran after the philosophers. In the middle ages, books tell us, they worshipped the knights errant. They are always on the winning side, the cunning little beauties. In the war-time, when the soldiers had to play the world's game, the ladies all caught the red-coat fever; now, in these talking and thinking days (and be

hanged to them for bores), they have the black-coat fever for the same reason. The parsons are the workers nowadays — or rather, all the world expects them to be so. They have the game in their own hands, if they did but know how to play it."

Lancelot stood still, sulking over many thoughts. The colonel lounged across the room towards Lord Vieuxbois, a quiet, truly high-bred young man, with a sweet open countenance, and an ample forehead, whose size would have vouched for great talents, had not the promise been contradicted by the weakness of the over-delicate mouth and chin.

"Who is that with whom you came into the room, Bracebridge?" asked Lord Vieuxbois. "I am sure I know his face."

"Lancelot Smith, the man who has taken the shooting-box at Lower Whitford."

"Oh, I remember him well enough at Cambridge! He was one of a set who tried to look like blackguards, and really succeeded tolerably. They used to eschew gloves, and drink nothing but beer, and smoke disgusting short pipes; and when we established the Coverley Club in Trinity, they set up an opposition, and called themselves the Navvies. And they used to make piratical expeditions down to Lynn in eight oars, to attack bargemen, and fen girls, and shoot ducks, and sleep under turf-stacks, and come home when they had drank all the public-house taps dry. I remember the man perfectly."

"Navvy or none," said the colonel, "he has just the longest head and the noblest heart of any man I ever met. If he does not distinguish himself before he dies, I know nothing of human nature."

"Ah yes, I believe he is clever enough! — took a good degree, a better one than I did — but horribly eclectic; full of mesmerism, and German metaphysics, and all that sort of thing. I heard of him one night last spring, on which he had been seen, if you will believe it, going successively into a Swedenborgian chapel, the Garrick's Head, and one of Elliotson's magnetic *soirées*. What can you expect after that?"

"A great deal," said Bracebridge, drily. "With such a head as he carries on his shoulders the man might be another Mirabeau, if he held the right cards in the right rubber. And he really ought to suit you, for he raves about the middle ages, and chivalry, and has edited a book full of old ballads."

"Oh, all the eclectics do that sort of thing; and small thanks to them. However, I will speak to him after dinner, and see what there is in him."

And Lord Vieuxbois turned away, and, alas for Lancelot! sat next to Argemone at dinner. Lancelot, who was cross with everybody for what was nobody's fault, revenged himself all dinner-time by never speaking a word to his next neighbor, Miss Newbroom, who was longing with all her heart to talk sentiment to him about the Exhibition; and when Argemone, in the midst of a brilliant word-skirmish with Lord Vieuxbois, stole a glance at him, he chose to fancy that they were both talking of him, and looked more cross than ever.

After the ladies retired, Lancelot, in his sulky way, made up his mind that the conversation was going to be ineffably stupid; and set to to dream, sip claret, and count the minutes till he found

himself in the drawing-room with Argemone. But he soon discovered, as I suppose we all have, that "it never rains but it pours," and that one cannot fall in with a new fact or a new acquaintance but next day twenty fresh things shall spring up as if by magic, throwing unexpected light on one's new phenomenon. Lancelot's head was full of the condition-of-the-poor question, and lo! everybody seemed destined to talk about it.

"Well, Lord Vieuxbois," said the host, casually, "my girls are raving about your new school. They say it is a perfect antiquarian gem."

"Yes, tolerable, I believe. But Wales has disappointed me a little. That vile modernist naturalism is creeping back even into our painted glass. I could have wished that the artist's designs for the windows had been a little more Catholic."

"How then?" asked the host, with a puzzled face.

"Oh, he means," said Bracebridge, "that the figures' wrists and ankles were not sufficiently dislocated, and the patron saint did not look quite like a starved rabbit with its neck wrung. Some of the faces, I am sorry to say, were positively like good-looking men and women."

"Oh, I understand," said Lord Minchampstead; "Bracebridge's tongue is privileged, you know, Lord Vieuxbois, so you must not be angry."

"I don't see my way into all this," said Squire Lavington (which was very likely to be true, considering that he never looked for his way). "I don't see how all these painted windows, and crosses, and chanting, and the deuce and the Pope only know what else, are to make boys any better."

"We have it on the highest authority," said Vieuxbois, "that pictures and music are the books of the unlearned. I do not think that we have any right in the nineteenth century to contest an opinion which the fathers of the Church gave in the fourth."

"At all events," said Lancelot, "it is by pictures and music, by art and song, and symbolic representations, that all nations have been educated in their adolescence! and as the youth of the individual is exactly analogous to the youth of the collective race, we should employ the same means of instruction with our children which succeeded in the early ages with the whole world."

Lancelot might as well have held his tongue — nobody understood him but Vieuxbois, and he had been taught to scent German neology in everything, as some folks are taught to scent Jesuitry, especially when it involved an inductive law, and not a mere red-tape precedent, and, therefore, could not see that Lancelot was arguing for him.

"All very fine, Smith," said the Squire; "it's a pity you won't leave off puzzling your head with books, and stick to fox-hunting. All you young gentlemen will do is to turn the heads of the poor with your cursed education." The national oath followed, of course. "Pictures and chanting! Why, when I was a boy, a good honest laboring man wanted to see nothing better than a half-penny ballad, with a wood-cut at the top, and they worked very well then, and wanted for nothing."

"Oh, we shall give them the half-penny ballads in time!" said Vieuxbois, smiling.

"You will do a very good deed, then," said mine

host. "But I am sorry to say that, as far as I can find from my agents, when the upper classes write cheap publications, the lower classes will not read them."

"Too true," said Vieuxbois.

"Is not the cause," asked Lancelot, "just that the upper classes do write them?"

"The writings of working men, certainly," said Lord Minchampstead, "have an enormous sale among their own class."

"Just because they express the feelings of that class, of which I am beginning to fear that we know very little. Look again, what a noble literature of people's songs and hymns Germany has. Some of Lord Vieuxbois's friends, I know, are busy translating many of them."

"As many of them, that is to say," said Vieuxbois, "as are compatible with a real Church spirit."

"Be it so; but who wrote them? Not the German aristocracy for the people, but the German people for themselves. There is the secret of their power. Why not educate the people up to such a standard that they should be able to write their own literature?"

"What," said Mr. Chalklands, of Chalklands, who sat opposite, "would you have working men turn ballad writers? There would be an end of work, then, I think."

"I have not heard," said Lancelot, "that the young women — *ladies*, I ought to say, if the word mean anything — who wrote the 'Lowell Offering,' spun less or worse cotton than their neighbors."

"On the contrary," said Lord Minchampstead, "we have the most noble accounts of heroic industry and self-sacrifice in girls whose education,

to judge by its fruits, might shame that of most English young ladies."

Mr. Chalklands expressed certain confused notions that, in America, factory girls carried green silk parasols, put the legs of pianos into trousers, and were too prudish to make a shirt, or to call it a shirt after it was made, he did not quite remember which.

"It is a great pity," said Lord Minchampstead, "that our factory girls are not in the same state of civilization. But it is socially impossible. America is in an abnormal state. In a young country the laws of political economy do not make themselves fully felt. Here, where we have no uncleared world to drain the labor-market, we may pity and alleviate the condition of the working-classes, but we can do nothing more. All the modern schemes for the amelioration which ignore the laws of competition must end either in pauperization" — (with a glance at Lord Vicuxbois), — "or in the destruction of property."

Lancelot said nothing, but thought the more. It did strike him at the moment that the few might, possibly, be made for the many, and not the many for the few; and that property was made for man, not man for property. But he contented himself with asking:

"You think, then, my lord, that in the present state of society, no dead-lift can be given to the condition — in plain English, the wages — of working men, without the destruction of property?"

Lord Minchampstead smiled, and parried the question.

"There may be other dead-lift ameliorations, my young friend, besides a dead-lift of wages."

So Lancelot thought, also; but Lord Minchampstead would have been a little startled could he have seen Lancelot's notion of a dead-lift. Lord Minchampstead was thinking of cheap bread and sugar. Do you think that I will tell you of what Lancelot was thinking?

But here Vieuxbois spurred in to break a last lance. He had been very much disgusted with the turn the conversation was taking, for he considered nothing more heterodox than the notion that the poor were to educate themselves. In his scheme, of course the clergy and the gentry were to educate the poor, who were to take down thankfully as much as it was thought proper to give them: and all beyond was "self-will" and "private judgment," the fathers of Dissent and Chartism, Trades'-union strikes, and French Revolutions, *et si qua alia.*

"And pray, Mr. Smith, may I ask what limit you would put to education?"

"The capacities of each man," said Lancelot. "If man living in civilized society has one right which he can demand it is this, that the State which exists by his labor shall enable him to develop, or, at least, not hinder his developing, his whole faculties to their very utmost, however lofty that may be. While a man who might be an author remains a spade-drudge, or a journeyman while he has capacities for a master; while any man able to rise in life remains by social circumstances lower than he is willing to place himself, that man has a right to complain of the State's injustice and neglect."

"Really, I do not see," said Vieuxbois, "why people should wish to rise in life. They had no

such self-willed fancy in the good old times. The whole notion is a product of these modern days ——"

He would have said more, but he luckily remembered at whose table he was sitting.

"I think, honestly," said Lancelot, whose blood was up, "that we gentlemen all run into the same fallacy. We fancy ourselves the fixed and necessary element in society, to which all others are to accommodate themselves. 'Given the rights of the few rich, to find the condition of the many poor.' It seems to me that other postulate is quite as fair: 'Given the rights of the many poor, to find the condition of the few rich.'"

Lord Minchampstead laughed.

"If you hit us so hard, Mr. Smith, I must really denounce you as a Communist. Lord Vieuxbois, shall we join the ladies?"

In the drawing-room, poor Lancelot, after rejecting overtures of fraternity from several young ladies, set himself steadily again against the wall to sulk and watch Argemone. But this time she spied in a few minutes his melancholy, moonstruck face, swam up to him, and said something kind and commonplace. She spoke in the simplicity of her heart, but he chose to think she was patronizing him — she had not talked commonplaces to the vicar. He tried to say something smart and cutting, — stuttered, broke down, blushed, and shrank back again to the wall, fancying that every eye in the room was on him; and for one moment a flash of sheer hatred to Argemone swept through him.

Was Argemone patronizing him? Of course she was. True, she was but three-and-twenty,

and he was of the same age; but, spiritually and socially, the girl develops ten years earlier than the boy. She was flattered and worshipped by gray-headed men, and in her simplicity she thought it a noble self-sacrifice to stoop to notice the poor awkward youth. And yet if he could have seen the pure moonlight of sisterly pity which filled all her heart as she retreated, with something of a blush and something of a sigh, and her heart fluttered and fell, would he have been content? Not he. It was her love he wanted, and not her pity; it was to conquer her and possess her, and inform himself with her image, and her with his own; though as yet he did not know it; though the moment that she turned away he cursed himself for selfish vanity, and moroseness and conceit.

"Who am I to demand her all to myself? Her, the glorious, the saintly, the unfallen! Is not a look, a word, infinitely more than I deserve? And yet, I pretend to admire tales of chivalry! Old knightly hearts would have fought and wandered for years to earn a tithe of the favors which have been bestowed on me unasked." ——

Peace! poor Lancelot! Thy egg is by no means addle; but the chick is breaking the shell in somewhat a cross-grained fashion.

CHAPTER VII

THE DRIVE HOME, AND WHAT CAME OF IT

NOW it was not extraordinary that Squire Lavington had "assimilated" a couple of bottles of Carbonel's best port; for however abstemious the new lord himself might be, he felt for the habits, and for the vote of an old-fashioned Whig squire. Nor was it extraordinary that he fell fast asleep the moment he got into the carriage; nor, again, that his wife and daughters were not solicitous about waking him; nor, on the other hand, that the coachman and footman, who were like all the squire's servants, of the good old sort, honest, faithful, boozing, extravagant, happy-go-lucky souls, who had "been about the place these forty years," were somewhat owlish and unsteady on the box. Nor was it extraordinary that there was a heavy storm of lightning, for that happened three times a-week in the chalk hills the summer through; nor, again, that under these circumstances the horses, who were of the squire's own breeding, and never thoroughly broke (nothing was done thoroughly at Whitford), went rather wildly home, and that the carriage swung alarmingly down the steep hills, and the boughs brushed the windows rather too often. But it was extraordinary that Mrs.

Lavington had cast off her usual primness, and seemed to-night, for the first time in her life, in an exuberant good humor, which she evinced by snubbing her usual favorite Honoria, and lavishing caresses on Argemone, whose vagaries she usually regarded with a sort of puzzled terror, like a hen who has hatched a duckling.

"Honoria, take your feet off my dress. Argemone, my child, I hope you spent a pleasant evening?"

Argemone answered by some tossy commonplace.

A pause — and then Mrs. Lavington recommenced:

"How very pleasing that poor young Lord Vieuxbois is, after all!"

"I thought you disliked him so much."

"His opinions, my child; but we must hope for the best. He seems moral and well inclined, and really desirous of doing good in his way; and so successful in the House, too, I hear."

"To me," said Argemone, "he seems to want life, originality, depth, everything that makes a great man. He knows nothing but what he has picked up ready-made from books. After all, his opinions are the one redeeming point in him."

"Ah, my dear, when it pleases Heaven to open your eyes, you will see as I do!"

Poor Mrs. Lavington! Unconscious spokeswoman for the ninety-nine hundredths of the human race! What are we all doing from morning to night, but setting up our own fancies as the measure of all heaven and earth, and say-

ing, each in his own dialect, Whig, Radical, or Tory, Papist or Protestant, "When it pleases Heaven to open your eyes you will see as I do"?

"It is a great pity," went on Mrs. Lavington, meditatively, "to see a young man so benighted and thrown away. With his vast fortune, too — such a means of good! Really we ought to have seen a little more of him. I think Mr. O'Blareaway's conversation might be a blessing to him. I think of asking him over to stay a week at Whitford, to meet that sainted young man."

Now Argemone did not think the Reverend Panurgus O'Blareaway, incumbent of Lower Whitford, at all a sainted young man, but, on the contrary, a very vulgar, slippery Irishman; and she had, somehow, tired of her late favorite, Lord Vieuxbois; so she answered tossily enough:

"Really, mamma, a week of Lord Vieuxbois will be too much. We shall be bored to death with the Cambridge Camden Society, and ballads for the people."

"I think, my dear," said Mrs. Lavington (who had, half unconsciously to herself, more reasons than one for bringing the young lord to Whitford), "I think, my dear, that his conversation, with all its faults, will be a very improving change for your father. I hope he's asleep."

The squire's nose answered for itself.

"Really, what between Mr. Smith, and Colonel Bracebridge, and their very ineligible friend, Mr. Mellot, whom I should never have allowed to enter my house if I had suspected his religious

views, the place has become a hot-bed of false doctrine and heresy. I have been quite frightened when I have heard their conversation at dinner, lest the footmen should turn infidels!"

"Perhaps, mamma," said Honoria, slyly, "Lord Vieuxbois might convert them to something quite as bad. How shocking if old Giles, the butler, should turn Papist!"

"Honoria, you are very silly. Lord Vieuxbois, at least, can be trusted. *He* has no liking for low companions. He is above joking with grooms, and taking country walks with gamekeepers."

It was lucky that it was dark, for Honoria and Argemone both blushed crimson.

"Your poor father's mind has been quite unsettled by all their ribaldry. They have kept him so continually amused, that all my efforts to bring him to a sense of his awful state have been more unavailing than ever."

Poor Mrs. Lavington! She had married, at eighteen, a man far her inferior in intellect; and had become — as often happens in such cases — a prude and a devotee. The squire, who really admired and respected her, confined his disgust to sly curses at the Methodists (under which name he used to include every species of religious earnestness, from Quakerism to that of Mr. Newman). Mrs. Lavington used at first to dignify these disagreeables by the name of persecution, and now she was trying to convert the old man by coldness, severity, and long curtain-lectures, utterly unintelligible to their victim, because couched in the peculiar conventional phraseology of a certain school. She forgot, poor earnest soul, that the same form of religion

which had captivated a disappointed girl of twenty, might not be the most attractive one for a jovial old man of sixty.

Argemone, who a fortnight before would have chimed in with all her mother's lamentations, now felt a little nettled and jealous. She could not bear to hear Lancelot classed with the colonel.

"Indeed," she said, "if amusement is bad for my father, he is not likely to get much of it during Lord Vieuxbois's stay. But, of course, mamma, you will do as you please."

"Of course I shall, my dear," answered the good lady, in a tragedy-queen tone. "I shall only take the liberty of adding, that it is very painful to me to find you adding to the anxiety which your unfortunate opinions give me, by throwing every possible obstacle in the way of my plans for your good."

Argemone burst into proud tears (she often did so after a conversation with her mother). "Plans for my good!"—And an unworthy suspicion about her mother crossed her mind, and was peremptorily expelled again. What turn the conversation would have taken next, I know not, but at that moment Honoria and her mother uttered a fearful shriek, as their side of the carriage jolted half-way up the bank, and stuck still in that pleasant position.

The squire awoke, and the ladies simultaneously clapped their hands to their ears, knowing what was coming. He thrust his head out of the window, and discharged a broadside of at least ten pounds' worth of oaths (Bow Street valuation) at the servants, who were examining the

broken wheel, with a side volley or two at Mrs. Lavington for being frightened. He often treated her and Honoria to that style of oratory. At Argemone he had never sworn but once since she left the nursery, and was so frightened at the consequences, that he took care never to do it again.

But there they were fast, with a broken wheel, plunging horses, and a drunken coachman. Luckily for them, the colonel and Lancelot were following close behind, and came to their assistance.

The colonel, as usual, solved the problem.

"Your dog-cart will carry four, Smith?"

"It will."

"Then let the ladies get in, and Mr. Lavington drive them home."

"What?" said the squire, "with both my hands red-hot with the gout? You must drive three of us, colonel, and one of us must walk."

"I will walk," said Argemone, in her determined way.

Mrs. Lavington began something about propriety, but was stopped with another pound's worth of oaths by the squire, who, however, had tolerably recovered his good humor, and hurried Mrs. Lavington and Honoria, laughingly, into the dog-cart, saying:

"Argemone's safe enough with Smith; the servants will lead the horses behind them. It's only three miles home, and I should like to see any one speak to her twice while Smith's fists are in the way."

Lancelot thought so too.

"You can trust yourself to me, Miss Lavington?"

"By all means. I shall enjoy the walk after ——" and she stopped. In a moment the dog-cart had rattled off, with a parting curse from the squire to the servants, who were unharnessing the horses.

Argemone took Lancelot's arm; the soft touch thrilled through and through him; and Argemone felt, she knew not why, a new sensation run through her frame. She shuddered — not with pain.

"You are cold, Miss Lavington?"

"Oh, not in the least." Cold! when every vein was boiling so strangely! A soft luscious melancholy crept over her. She had always had a terror of darkness; but now she felt quite safe in his strength. The thought of her own unprotected girlhood drew her heart closer to him. She remembered with pleasure the stories of his personal prowess, which had once made her think him coarse and brutal. For the first time in her life she knew the delight of dependence — the holy charm of weakness. And as they paced on silently together, through the black awful night, while the servants lingered, far out of sight, about the horses, she found out how utterly she trusted to him.

"Listen!" she said. A nightingale was close to them, pouring out his whole soul in song.

"Is it not very late in the year for a nightingale?"

"He is waiting for his mate. She is rearing a late brood, I suppose."

"What do you think it is which can stir him up to such an ecstasy of joy, and transfigure his whole heart into melody?"

"What but love, the fulness of all joy, the evoker of all song?"

"All song? — The angels sing in heaven."

"So they say: but the angels must love if they sing."

"They love God!"

"And no one else?"

"Oh yes: but that is universal, spiritual love; not earthly love — a narrow passion for an individual."

"How do we know that they do not learn to love all by first loving one?"

"Oh, the angelic life is single!"

"Who told you so, Miss Lavington?"

She quoted the stock text, of course: "'In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels.'"

"'As the tree falls, so it lies.' And God forbid that those who have been true lovers on earth should contract new marriages in the next world. Love is eternal. Death may part lovers, but not love. And how do we know that these angels, as they call them, if they be really persons, may not be united in pairs by some marriage bond, infinitely more perfect than any we can dream of on earth?"

"That is a very wild view, Mr. Smith, and not sanctioned by the Church," said Argemone, severely. (Curious and significant it is, how severe ladies are apt to be whenever they talk of the Church.)

"In plain historic fact, the early fathers and the middle-age monks did not sanction it: and are not they the very last persons to whom one would go to be taught about marriage? Strange!

that people should take their notions of love from the very men who prided themselves on being bound, by their own vows, to know nothing about it!"

"They were very holy men."

"But still men, as I take it. And do you not see that Love is, like all spiritual things, only to be understood by experience — by loving?"

"But is love spiritual?"

"Pardon me, but what a question for one who believes that 'God is love'!"

"But the divines tell us that the love of human beings is earthly."

"How did they know? They had never tried. Oh, Miss Lavington! cannot you see that in those barbarous and profligate ages of the later empire, it was impossible for men to discern the spiritual beauty of marriage, degraded as it had been by heathen brutality? Do you not see that there must have been a continual tendency in the minds of a celibate clergy to look with contempt, almost with spite, on pleasures which were forbidden to them?"

Another pause.

"It must be very delicious," said Argemone, thoughtfully, "for any one who believes it, to think that marriage can last through eternity. But, then, what becomes of entire love to God? How can we part our hearts between him and his creatures?"

"It is a sin, then, to love your sister? or your friend? What a low, material view of love, to fancy that you can cut it up into so many pieces, like a cake, and give to one person one tit-bit, and another to another, as the Popish books would

have you believe! Love is like flame — light as many fresh flames at it as you will, it grows, instead of diminishing, by the dispersion."

"It is a beautiful imagination."

"But, oh, how miserable and tantalizing a thought, Miss Lavington, to those who know that a priceless spirit is near them, which might be one with theirs through all eternity, like twin stars in one common atmosphere, forever giving and receiving wisdom and might, beauty and bliss, and yet are barred from their bliss by some invisible adamantine wall, against which they must beat themselves to death, like butterflies against the window-pane, gazing, and longing, and unable to guess why they are forbidden to enjoy!"

Why did Argemone withdraw her arm from his? He knew, and he felt that she was entrusted to him. He turned away from the subject.

"I wonder whether they are safe home by this time?"

"I hope my father will not catch cold. How sad, Mr. Smith, that he will swear so. I do not like to say it; and yet you must have heard him too often yourself."

"It is hardly a sin with him now, I think. He has become so habituated to it, that he attaches no meaning or notion whatsoever to his own oaths. I have heard him do it with a smiling face to the very beggar to whom he was giving half-a-crown. We must not judge a man of his school by the standard of our own day."

"Let us hope so," said Argemone, sadly.

There was another pause. At a turn of the hill road the black masses of beech-wood opened,

and showed the Priory lights twinkling right below. Strange that Argemone felt sorry to find herself so near home.

"We shall go to town next week," said she; "and then —— You are going to Norway this summer, are you not?"

"No. I have learnt that my duty lies nearer home."

"What are you going to do?"

"I wish this summer, for the first time in my life, to try and do some good — to examine a little into the real condition of English working men."

"I am afraid, Mr. Smith, that I did not teach you that duty."

"Oh, you have taught me priceless things! You have taught me beauty is the sacrament of heaven, and love its gate; that that which is the most luscious is also the most pure."

"But I never spoke a word to you on such subjects."

"There are those, Miss Lavington, to whom a human face can speak truths too deep for books."

Argemone was silent; but she understood him. Why did she not withdraw her arm a second time?

In a moment more the colonel hailed them from the dog-cart and behind him came the britschka with a relay of servants.

They parted with a long, lingering pressure of the hand, which haunted her young palm all night in dreams. Argemone got into the carriage, Lancelot jumped into the dog-cart, took the reins, and relieved his heart by galloping Sandy up the hill, and frightening the returning coachman down one bank and his led horses up the other.

"*Vogue la Galère*, Lancelot? I hope you have made good use of your time?"

But Lancelot spoke no word all the way home, and wandered till dawn in the woods around his cottage, kissing the hand which Argemone's palm had pressed.

CHAPTER VIII

WHITHER?

SOME three months slipped away — right dreary months for Lancelot, for the Lavingtons went to Baden-Baden for the summer. "The waters were necessary for their health." . . . How wonderful it is, by the by, that those German Brunnen are never necessary for poor people's health! . . . and they did not return till the end of August. So Lancelot buried himself up to the eyes in the Condition-of-the-Poor question — that is, in blue books, red books, sanitary reports, mine reports, factory reports; and came to the conclusion, which is now pretty generally entertained, that something was the matter — but what, no man knew, or, if they knew, thought proper to declare. Hopeless and bewildered, he left the books, and wandered day after day from farm to hamlet, and from field to tramper's tent, in hopes of finding out the secret for himself. What he saw, of course I must not say; for if I did the reviewers would declare, as usual, one and all, that I copied out of the Morning Chronicle; and the fact that these pages, ninety-nine hundredths of them at least, were written two years before the Morning Chronicle began its invaluable investigations, would be contemptuously put aside as at once impossible

and arrogant. I shall therefore only say, that he saw what every one else has seen, at least heard of, and got tired of hearing — though, alas! they have not got tired of seeing it; and so proceed with my story, only mentioning therein certain particulars which folks seem, to me, somewhat strangely, to have generally overlooked.

But whatever Lancelot saw, or thought he saw, I cannot say that it brought him any nearer to a solution of the question; and he at last ended by a sulky acquiescence in Sam Weller's memorable dictum: "Who it is I can't say; but all I can say is that *somebody* ought to be wopped for this!"

But one day, turning over, as hopelessly as he was beginning to turn over everything else, a new work of Mr. Carlyle's, he fell on some such words as these: —

"The beginning and the end of what is the matter with us in these days is — that *we have forgotten God.*"

Forgotten God? That was at least a defect of which blue books had taken no note. And it was one which, on the whole — granting, for the sake of argument, any real, living, or practical existence to That Being, might be a radical one — it brought him many hours of thought, that saying; and when they were over, he rose up and went to find — Tregarva.

"Yes, he is the man. He is the only man with whom I have ever met, of whom I could be sure that, independent of his own interest, without the allurements of respectability and decency, of habit and custom, he believes in God. And he too is a poor man; he has known the struggles,

temptations, sorrows of the poor. I will go to him."

But as Lancelot rose to find him, there was put into his hand a letter, which kept him at home awhile longer — none other, in fact, than the long-expected answer from Luke.

"Well my dear Cousin, you may possibly have some logical ground from which to deny Popery, if you deny all other religions with it; but how those who hold any received form of Christianity whatsoever can fairly side with you against Rome, I cannot see. I am sure I have been sent to Rome by them, not drawn thither by Jesuits. Not merely by their defects and inconsistencies; not merely because they go on taunting us, and shrieking at us with the cry that we ought to go to Rome, till we at last, wearied out, take them at their word, and do at their bidding the thing we used to shrink from with terror — not this merely, but the very doctrines we hold in common with them, have sent me to Rome. For would these men have known of them if Rome had not been? The Trinity — the Atonement — the Inspiration of Scripture — a future state — that point on which the present generation, without a smattering of psychological science, without even the old belief in apparitions, dogmatizes so narrowly and arrogantly — what would they have known of them but for Rome? And she says there are three realms in the future state . . . heaven, hell, and purgatory . . . What right have they to throw away the latter, and arbitrarily retain the two former? I am told that Scripture gives no warrant for a third state. She says that it does — that it teaches that implicitly, as it teaches other, the very highest doctrines; some hold, the Trinity itself. . . . It may be proved from Scripture; for it may be proved from the love and justice of God revealed in Scripture. The Protestants

divide — in theory, that is — mankind into two classes, the righteous, who are destined to infinite bliss; the wicked, who are doomed to infinite torment; in which latter class, to make their arbitrary division exhaustive, they put of course nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand, and doom to everlasting companionship with Borgias and Cagliostros, the gentle, frivolous girl, or the peevish boy, who would have shrunk, in life, with horror from the contact. . . . Well, at least, their hell is hellish enough . . . if it were but just. . . . But I, Lancelot, I cannot believe it! I will not believe it! I had a brother once — affectionate, simple, generous, full of noble aspirations — but without, alas! a thought of God; yielding in a hundred little points, and some great ones, to the infernal temptations of a public school. . . . He died at seventeen. Where is he now? Lancelot! where is he now? Never for a day has that thought left my mind for years. Not in heaven — for he has no right there; Protestants would say that as well as I. . . . Where, then? — Lancelot! not in that other place. I cannot, I will not believe it. For the sake of God's honor, as well as of my own sanity, I will not believe it! There must be some third place — some intermediate chance, some door of hope — some purifying and redeeming process beyond the grave. . . . Why not a purifying fire? Ages of that are surely punishment enough — and if there be a fire of hell, why not a fire of purgatory? . . . After all, the idea of purgatory as a fire is only an opinion, not a dogma of the Church. . . . But if the gross flesh which has sinned is to be punished by the matter which it has abused, why may it not be purified by it?

"You may laugh, if you will, at both, and say again, as I have heard you say ere now, that the popular Christian paradise and hell are but a Pagan Olympus and Tartarus, as grossly material as Mahomet's, without the

honest thorough-going sexuality, which you thought made his notion logical and consistent. . . . Well, you may say that, but Protestants cannot; for their idea of heaven and ours is the same — with this exception, that theirs will contain but a thin band of saved ones, while ours will fill and grow to all eternity. . . . I tell you, Lancelot, it is just the very doctrines for which England most curses Rome, and this very purgatory at the head of them, which constitute her strength and her allurement; which appeal to the reason, the conscience, the heart of men, like me, who have revolted from the novel superstition which looks pitilessly on at the fond memories of the brother, the prayers of the orphan, the doubled desolation of the widow, with its cold terrible assurance, 'There is no hope for thy loved and lost ones — no hope, but hell for evermore!'

"I do not expect to convert you. You have your metempsychosis, and your theories of progressive incarnation, and your monads, and your spirits of the stars and flowers. I have not forgotten a certain talk of ours over Falk Von Müller's 'Recollections of Goethe,' and how you materialists are often the most fantastic of theorists. . . . I do not expect, I say, to convert you. I only want to show you there is no use trying to show the self-satisfied Pharisees of the popular sect — why, in spite of all their curses, men still go back to Rome."

Lancelot read this, and re-read it; and smiled, but sadly — and the more he read, the stronger its arguments seemed to him, and he rejoiced thereat. For there is a bad pleasure — happy he who has not felt it — in a pitiless *reductio ad absurdum*, which asks tauntingly, "Why do you not follow out your own conclusions?" — instead of thanking God that people do not follow them out, and that their hearts are sounder than their

heads. Was it with this feeling that the fancy took possession of him, to show the letter to Tregarva? I hope not — perhaps he did not altogether wish to lead him into temptation, any more than I wish to lead my readers, but only to make him, just as I wish to make them, face manfully a real awful question now racking the hearts of hundreds, and see how they will be able to answer the sophist fiend — for honestly, such he is — when their time comes, as come it will. At least he wanted to test at once Tregarva's knowledge and his logic. As for his "faith," alas! he had not so much reverence for it as to care what effect Luke's arguments might have there. "The whole man," quoth Lancelot to himself, "is a novel phenomenon; and all phenomena, however magnificent, are surely fair subjects for experiment. Magendie may have gone too far, certainly, in dissecting a live dog — but what harm in my pulling the mane of a dead lion?"

So he showed the letter to Tregarva as they were fishing together one day — for Lancelot had been installed duly in the Whitford trout preserves — Tregarva read it slowly; asked, shrewdly enough, the meaning of a word or two as he went on; at last folded it up deliberately, and returned it to its owner with a deep sigh. Lancelot said nothing for a few minutes; but the giant seemed so little inclined to open the conversation, that he was forced at last to ask him what he thought of it.

"It isn't a matter for thinking, sir, to my mind — There 's a nice fish on the feed there, just over-right that alder."

"Hang the fish! Why not a matter for thinking?"

"To my mind, sir, a man may think a deal too much about many matters that come in his way."

"What should he do with them, then?"

"Mind his own business."

"Pleasant for those whom they concern! — That's rather a cold-blooded speech for you, Tregarva!"

The Cornishman looked up at him earnestly. His eyes were glittering — was it with tears?

"Don't fancy I don't feel for the poor young gentleman — God help him! — I've been through it all — or not through it, that's to say. I had a brother once, as fine a young fellow as ever handled pick, as kind-hearted as a woman, and as honest as the sun in heaven. — But he would drink, sir; — that one temptation, he never could stand it. And one day at the shaft's mouth, reaching after the kibble-chain — maybe he was in liquor, maybe not — the Lord knows; but ——

"I didn't know him again, sir, when we picked him up, any more than ——" and the strong man shuddered from head to foot, and beat impatiently on the ground with his heavy heel, as if to crush down the rising horror.

"Where is he, sir?"

A long pause.

"Do you think I didn't ask that, sir, for years and years after, of God, and my own soul, and heaven and earth, and the things under the earth, too? For many a night did I go down that mine out of my turn, and sat for hours in that level, watching and watching, if perhaps the spirit of

him might haunt about, and tell his poor brother one word of news — one way or the other — anything would have been a comfort — but the doubt I could n't bear. And yet at last I learnt to bear it — and what 's more, I learnt not to care for it. It 's a bold word — there 's one who knows whether or not it is a true one."

"Good heavens! — and what then did you say to yourself?"

"I said this, sir — or rather, one came as I was on my knees, and said it to me — What 's done you can't mend. What 's left, you can. Whatever has happened is God's concern now, and none but His. Do you see that as far as you can no such thing ever happen again, on the face of His earth. And from that day, sir, I gave myself up to that one thing, and will until I die, to save the poor young fellows like myself, who are left nowadays to the devil, body and soul, just when they are in the prime of their power to work for God."

"Ah!" said Lancelot — "if poor Luke's spirit were but as strong as yours!"

"I strong?" answered he, with a sad smile; "and so you think, sir. But it 's written, and it 's true — 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.'"

"Then you absolutely refuse to try to fancy your — his present state?"

"Yes, sir, because if I did fancy it, that would be a certain sign I did n't know it. If we can't conceive what God has prepared for those that we know loved Him, how much less can we for them of whom we don't know whether they loved Him or not?"

"Well," thought Lancelot to himself, "I did

not do so very wrong in trusting your intellect to cut through a sophism."

"But what do you believe, Tregarva?"

"I believe this, sir — and your cousin will believe the same, if he will only give up, as I am sore afraid he will need to some day, sticking to arguments and doctrines about the Lord, and love and trust the Lord himself. I believe, sir, that the judge of all the earth will do right — and what 's right can't be wrong, nor cruel either, else it would not be like Him who loved us to the death, that 's all I know; and that 's enough for me. To whom little is given, of him is little required. He that didn't know his Master's will, will be beaten with few stripes, and he that did know it, as I do, will be beaten with many, if he neglects it — and that latter, not the former, is my concern."

"Well," thought Lancelot to himself, "this great heart has gone down to the root of the matter — the right and wrong of it. He, at least, has not forgotten God. Well, I would give up all the teleologies and cosmogonies that I ever dreamt or read, just to believe what he believes — Heigho and well-a-day! — Paul! hist? I 'll swear that was an otter!"

"I hope not, sir, I 'm sure. I haven't seen the spraint of one here this two years."

"There again — don't you see something move under that marl bank?"

Tregarva watched a moment, and then ran up to the spot, and throwing himself on his face on the edge, leant over, grappled something — and was instantly, to Lancelot's astonishment, grappled in his turn by a rough, lank, white dog,

whose teeth, however, could not get through the velveteen sleeve.

"I 'll give in, keeper! I 'll give in. Doan't ye harm the dog! he 's deaf as a post, you knows."

"I won't harm him if you take him off, and come up quietly."

This mysterious conversation was carried on with a human head, which peeped above the water, its arms supporting from beneath the growling cur — such a visage as only worn-out poachers, or trampling drovers, or London chiffonniers carry; pear-shaped and retreating to a narrow peak above, while below, the bleared cheeks, and drooping lips, and peering purblind eyes, perplexed, hopeless, defiant, and yet sneaking, bespeak *their* share in the "inheritance of the kingdom of heaven." — Savages without the resources of a savage — slaves without the protection of a master — to whom the cart-whip and the rice-swamp would be a change for the better — for there, at least, is food and shelter.

Slowly and distrustfully a dripping scarecrow of rags and bones rose from his hiding-place in the water, and then stopped suddenly, and seemed inclined to dash through the river; but Tregarva held him fast.

"There 's two on ye! That 's a shame! I'll surrender to no man but you, Paul. Hold off, or I 'll set the dog on ye!"

"It 's a gentleman fishing. He won't tell — will you, sir?" And he turned to Lancelot. "Have pity on the poor creature, sir, for God's sake — it is n't often he gets it."

"I won't tell, my man. I've not seen you

doing any harm. Come out like a man, and let's have a look at you."

The creature crawled up the bank, and stood, abject and shivering, with the dog growling from between his legs.

"I was only looking for a kingfisher's nest: indeed now, I was, Paul Tregarva."

"Don't lie, you were setting night-lines. I saw a minnow lie on the bank as I came up. Don't lie; I hate liars."

"Well indeed, then — a man must live somehow."

"You don't seem to live by this trade, my friend," quoth Lancelot; "I cannot say it seems a prosperous business, by the look of your coat and trousers."

"That Tim Goddard stole all my clothes, and no good may they do him; last time as I went to gaol I gave them him to kep, and he went off for a navvy meantime; so there I am."

"If you will play with the dogs," quoth Tregarva, "you know what you will be bit by. Haven't I warned you? Of course you won't prosper: as you make your bed, so you must lie in it. The Lord can't be expected to let those prosper that forget Him. What mercy would it be to you if He did let you prosper by setting snares all church-time, as you were last Sunday, instead of going to church?"

"I say, Paul Tregarva, I've told you my mind about that afore. If I don't do what I knows to be right and good already, there ain't no use in me a damning myself all the deeper by going to church to hear more."

"God help you!" quoth poor Paul.

"Now, I say," quoth Crawy, with the air of a man who took the whole thing as a matter of course, no more to be repined at than the rain and wind — "what be you a going to do with me this time? I do hope you won't have me up to bench. 'T ain't a month now as I 'm out o' prizzum along o' they fir-toppings, and I should, you see ——" with a look up and down and round at the gay hay-meadows, and the fleet water, and the soft gleaming clouds, which to Lancelot seemed most pathetic, — "I should like to ha' a spell o' fresh air, like, afore I goes in again."

Tregarva stood over him and looked down at him, like some huge stately bloodhound on a trembling mangy cur. "Good heavens!" thought Lancelot, as his eye wandered from the sad steadfast dignity of the one to the dogged helpless misery of the other — "can those two be really fellow-citizens? fellow-Christians? — even animals of the same species? Hard to believe!"

True, Lancelot; but to quote you against yourself, Bacon, or rather the instinct which taught Bacon, teaches you to discern the invisible common law under the deceitful phenomena of sense.

"I must have those night-lines, Crawy," quoth Tregarva, at length.

"Then I must starve. You might ever so well take away the dog. They 're the life of me."

"They 're the death of you. Why don't you go and work, instead of idling about, stealing trout?"

"Be you a laughing at a poor fellow in his trouble? Who 'd gie me a day's work, I 'd like to know? It 's twenty year too late for that!"

Lancelot stood listening. Yes, that wretch, too, was a man and a brother — at least so books used to say. Time was, when he had looked on a poacher as a Pariah "*hostem humani generis*" — and only deplored that the law forbade him to shoot them down, like cats and otters; but he had begun to change his mind.

He had learnt, and learnt rightly, the self-indulgence, the danger, the cruelty, of indiscriminate alms. It looked well enough in theory, on paper. "But — but — but," thought Lancelot, "in practice, one can't help feeling a little of that un-economic feeling called pity. No doubt the fellow has committed an unpardonable sin in daring to come into the world when there was no call for him; one used to think, certainly, that children's opinions were not consulted on such points before they were born, and that therefore it might be hard to visit the sins of the fathers on the children, even though the labor-market were a little overstocked — '*mais nous avons changé tout cela*,' like M. Jourdain's doctors. No doubt, too, the fellow might have got work if he had chosen — in Kamschatka or the Cannibal Islands; for the political economists have proved, beyond a doubt, that there is work somewhere or other for every one who chooses to work. But as, unfortunately, society has neglected to inform him of the state of the Cannibal Island labor-market, or to pay his passage thither when informed thereof, he has had to choose in the somewhat limited labor-field of the Whitford Priors' union, whose workhouse is already every winter filled with abler-bodied men than he, between starvation — and this—— Well, as for

employing him, one would have thought that there was a little work waiting to be done in those five miles of heather and snipe-bog, which I used to tramp over last winter — but those, it seems, are still on the 'margin of cultivation,' and not a remunerative investment — that is, to capitalists. I wonder if any one had made Crawy a present of ten acres of them when he came of age, and commanded him to till that or be hanged, whether he would not have found it a profitable investment? But bygones are bygones, and there he is, and the moors, thanks to the rights of property — in this case the rights of the dog in the manger — belong to poor old Lavington — that is, the game and timber on them; and neither Crawy nor any one else can touch them. What can I do for him? Convert him? to what? For the next life, even Tregarva's talisman seems to fail. And for this life — perhaps if he had had a few more practical proofs of a divine justice and government — that 'kingdom of heaven' of which Luke talks, in the sensible bodily matters which he does appreciate, he might not be so unwilling to trust to it for the invisible spiritual matters which he does not appreciate. At all events, one has but one chance of winning him, and that is, through those five senses which he has left. What if he does spend the money in gross animal enjoyment? What will the amount of it be, compared with the animal enjoyments which my station allows me daily without reproach! A little more bacon — a little more beer — a little more tobacco; at all events they will be more important to him than a pair of new boots or an extra box of cigars to me." — And Lancelot put

his hand in his pocket, and pulled out a sovereign. No doubt he was a great goose; but if you can answer his arguments, reader, I cannot.

"Look here — what are your night-lines worth?"

"A matter of seven shilling; ain't they now, Paul Tregarva?"

"I should suppose they are."

"Then do you give me the lines, one and all, and there's a sovereign for you. — No, I can't trust you with it all at once. I'll give it to Tregarva, and he shall allow you four shillings a week as long as it lasts, if you'll promise to keep off Squire Lavington's river."

It was pathetic, and yet disgusting, to see the abject joy of the poor creature. "Well," thought Lancelot, "if he deserves to be wretched, so do I — why, therefore, if we are one as bad as the other, should I not make his wretchedness a little less for the time being?"

"I wain't come a-near the water. You trust me — I minds them as is kind to me" — and a thought seemed suddenly to lighten up his dull intelligence.

"I say, Paul, hark you here. I see that Bantam into D—— t'other day."

"What! is he down already?"

"With a dog-cart; he and another of his pals; and I see 'em take out a silk flue, I did. So, says I, you maun't be trying that ere along o' the Whitford trout; they kepers is out o' nights so sure as the moon."

"You did n't know that. Lying again!"

"No, but I sayed it in course. I did n't want they a-robbing here; so I think they worked mainly up Squire Vaurien's water."

"I wish I 'd caught them here," quoth Tregarva, grimly enough; "though I don't think they came, or I should have seen the track on the banks."

"But he sayed like, as how he should be down here again about pheasant shooting."

"Trust him for it. Let us know, now, if you see him."

"And that I will, too. I would n't save a feather for that 'ere old rascal, Harry. If the devil don't have he, I don't see no use in keeping no devil. But I minds them as has mercy on me, though my name is Crawy. Ay," he added bitterly, "'t ain't so many kind turns as I gets in this life, that I can afford to forget e'er a one." And he sneaked off, with the deaf dog at his heels.

"How did that fellow get his name, Tregarva?"

"Oh, most of them have nicknames round here. Some of them hardly know their own real names, sir." ("A sure sign of low civilization," thought Lancelot.) "But he got his a foolish way; and yet it was the ruin of him. When he was a boy of fifteen, he got miching away in church-time, as boys will, and took off his clothes to get in somewhere here in this very river, groping in the banks after craw-fish; and as the devil — for I can think no less — would have it, a big one catches hold of him by the fingers with one claw, and a root with the other, and holds him there till Squire Lavington comes out to take his walk after church, and there he caught the boy, and gave him a thrashing there and then, naked as he stood. And the story got wind, and all the

chaps round called him Crawy ever afterwards, and the poor fellow got quite reckless from that day, and never looked any one in the face again; and being ashamed of himself, you see, sir, was never ashamed of anything else — and there he is. That dog 's his only friend, and gets a livelihood for them both. It 's growing old now; and when it dies, he 'll starve."

"Well — the world has no right to blame him for not doing his duty, till it has done its own by him a little better."

"But the world will, sir, because it hates its duty, and cries all day long, like Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'"

"Do you think it knows its duty? I have found it easy enough to see that something is diseased, Tregarva; but to find the medicine first, and to administer it afterwards, is a very different matter."

"Well — I suppose the world will never be mended till the day of judgment."

"In plain English, not mended till it is destroyed. Hopeful for the poor world! I should fancy, if I believed that, that the devil in the old history — which you believe — had had the best of it with a vengeance, when he brought sin into the world, and ruined it. I dare not believe that. How dare you, who say that God sent His Son into the world to defeat the devil?"

Tregarva was silent awhile.

"Learning and the Gospel together ought to do something, sir, towards mending it. One would think so. But the prophecies are against that."

"As folks happen to read them just now. A hundred years hence they may be finding the very opposite meaning in them. Come, Tregarva, — suppose I teach you a little of the learning, and you teach me a little of the Gospel — do you think we two could mend the world between us, or even mend Whitford Priors?"

"God knows, sir," said Tregarva.

. . . . . .

"Tregarva," said Lancelot, as they were landing the next trout, "where will that Crawy go when he dies?"

"God knows, sir," said Tregarva.

. . . . . .

Lancelot went thoughtful home, and sat down — not to answer Luke's letter — for he knew no answer but Tregarva's, and that, alas! he could not give, for he did not believe it, but only longed to believe it. So he turned off the subject by a question —

"You speak of yourself as being already a member of the Romish communion. How is this? Have you given up your curacy? Have you told your father? I fancy that if you had done so I must have heard of it ere now. I entreat you to tell me the state of the case, for, heathen as I am, I am still an Englishman; and there are certain old superstitions still lingering among us — whencesoever we may have got them first — about truth and common honesty — you understand me. —

"Do not be angry. But there is a prejudice against the truthfulness of Romish priests and Romish converts. — It's no affair of mine. I see quite enough Protestant rogues and liars, to prevent my having any pleasure in proving Romanists, or any other persons, rogues and

liars also. But I am — if not fond of you — at least sufficiently fond to be anxious for your good name. You used to be an open-hearted fellow enough. Do prove to the world that *cœlum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*"

CHAPTER IX

HARRY VERNEY HEARS HIS LAST SHOT FIRED

THE day after the Lavingtons' return, when Lancelot walked up to the Priory with a fluttering heart to inquire after all parties, and see *one*, he found the squire in a great state of excitement.

A large gang of poachers, who had come down from London by rail, had been devastating all the covers round, to stock the London markets by the first of October, and intended, as Tregarva had discovered, to pay Mr. Lavington's preserves a visit that night. They did n't care for country justices, not they. Were n't all their fines paid by highly respectable game-dealers at the West End? They owned three dog-carts among them; a parcel by railway would bring them down bail to any amount; they tossed their money away at the public-houses, like gentlemen; thanks to the game laws, their profits ran high, and when they had swept the country pretty clean of game, why, they would just finish off the season by a stray highway robbery or two, and vanish into Babylon and their native night.

Such was Harry Verney's information as he strutted about the courtyard waiting for the squire's orders.

"But they 've put their nose into a furze-bush, Muster Smith, they have. We 've got our posse-

commontaturs, fourteen men, sir, as 'll play the whole vale to cricket, and whap them; and every one 'll fight, for they 're half poachers themselves, you see" (and Harry winked and chuckled); "and they can't abide no interlopers to come down and take the sport out of their mouths."

"But are you sure they 'll come to-night?"

"That 'ere Paul says so. Wonder how he found out — some of his underhand, colloguing, Methodist ways, I 'll warrant. I seed him preaching to that 'ere Crawy, three or four times when he ought to have hauled him up. He consorts with them poachers, sir, uncommon. I hope he ben't one himself, that 's all."

"Nonsense, Harry!"

"Oh? Eh? Don't say old Harry don't know nothing, that 's all. I 've fixed his flint, anyhow."

"Ah! Smith!" shouted the squire out of his study window, with a cheerful and appropriate oath. "The very man I wanted to see! You must lead these keepers for me to-night. They always fight better with a gentleman among them. Breeding tells, you know — breeding tells"

Lancelot felt a strong disgust at the occupation, but he was under too many obligations to the squire to refuse.

"Ay, I knew you were game," said the old man. "And you 'll find it capital fun. I used to think it so, I know, when I was young. Many a shindy have I had here in my uncle's time, under the very windows, before the chase was disparked, when the fellows used to come down after the deer."

Just then Lancelot turned and saw Argemone standing close to him. He almost sprang towards

her — and retreated, for he saw that she had overheard the conversation between him and her father.

"What! Mr. Smith!" said she, in a tone in which tenderness and contempt, pity and affected carelessness, were strangely mingled. "So! you are going to turn gamekeeper to-night?"

Lancelot was blundering out something, when the squire interposed.

"Let her alone, Smith. Women will be tender-hearted, you know. Quite right — but they don't understand these things. They fight with their tongues, and we with our fists; and then they fancy their weapons don't hurt — Ha! ha! ha!"

"Mr. Smith," said Argemone, in a low, determined voice, "if you have promised my father to go on this horrid business — go. But promise *me*, too, that you will only look on, or I will never ——"

Argemone had not time to finish her sentence before Lancelot had promised seven times over, and meant to keep his promise, as we all do.

About ten o'clock that evening Lancelot and Tregarva were walking stealthily up a ride in one of the home-covers, at the head of some fifteen fine young fellows, keepers, grooms, and *not extempore* "watchers," whom old Harry was marshalling and tutoring, with exhortations as many and as animated as if their ambition was *Mourir pour la patrie.*

"How does this sort of work suit you, Tregarva, for I don't like it at all! The fighting's all very well, but it's a poor cause."

"Oh, sir, I have no mercy on these Londoners. If it was these poor half-starved laborers, that snare the same hares that have been eating up

their garden-stuff all the week, I can't touch them, sir, and that 's truth; but these ruffians —— And yet, sir, would n't it be better for the parsons to preach to them, than for the keepers to break their heads?"

"Oh!" said Lancelot, "the parsons say all to them that they can."

Tregarva shook his head.

"I doubt that, sir. But, no doubt, there 's a great change for the better in the parsons. I remember the time, sir, that there was n't an earnest clergyman in the vale; and now every other man you meet is trying to do his best. But those London parsons, sir, what 's the matter with them? For all their societies and their schools, the devil seems to keep ahead of them sadly. I doubt they have n't found the right fly yet for publicans and sinners to rise at."

A distant shot in the cover.

"There they are, sir. I thought that Crawy would n't lead me false when I let him off."

"Well, fight away, then, and win. I have promised Miss Lavington not to lift a hand in the business."

"Then you 're a lucky man, sir. But the squire's game is his own, and we must do our duty by our master."

There was a rustle in the bushes, and a tramp of feet on the turf.

"There they are, sir, sure enough. The Lord keep us from murder this night!" And Tregarva pulled off his neckcloth, and shook his huge limbs, as if to feel that they were all in their places, in a way that augured ill for the man who came across him.

They turned the corner of a ride, and, in an instant, found themselves face to face with five or six armed men, with blackened faces, who, without speaking a word, dashed at them, and the fight began; reinforcements came up on each side, and the engagement became general.

"The forest-laws were sharp and stern,
The forest blood was keen,
They lashed together for life and death
Beneath the hollies green.

"The metal good and the walnut-wood
Did soon in splinters flee;
They tossed the orts to south and north,
And grappled knee to knee.

"They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
They wrestled still and sore;
The herbage sweet beneath their feet
Was stamped to mud and gore."

And all the while the broad still moon stared down on them grim and cold, as if with a saturnine sneer at the whole humbug; and the silly birds about whom all this butchery went on, slept quietly over their heads, every one with his head under his wing. Oh! if pheasants had but understanding, how they would split their sides with chuckling and crowing at the follies which civilized Christian men perpetrate for their precious sake!

Had I the pen of Homer (though they say he never used one), or even that of the worthy who wasted precious years in writing a "Homer Burlesqued," what heroic exploits might not I immortalize! In every stupid serf and cunning ruffian there, there was a heart as brave as Ajax's own; but then they fought with sticks instead of lances,

and hammered away on fustian jackets instead of brazen shields; and, therefore, poor fellows, they were beneath "the dignity of poetry," whatever that may mean. If one of your squeamish "dignity-of-poetry" critics had just had his head among the gun-stocks for five minutes that night, he would have found it grim tragic earnest enough; not without a touch of fun, though, here and there.

Lancelot leant against a tree and watched the riot with folded arms, mindful of his promise to Argemone, and envied Tregarva as he hurled his assailants right and left with immense strength, and led the van of battle royally. Little would Argemone have valued the real proof of love which he was giving her as he looked on sulkily, while his fingers tingled with longing to be up and doing. Strange — that mere lust of fighting, common to man and animals, whose traces even the lamb and the civilized child evince in their mock-fights, the earliest and most natural form of play. Is it, after all, the one human propensity which is utterly evil, incapable of being turned to any righteous use? Gross and animal no doubt it is, but not the less really pleasant, as every Irishman and many an Englishman knows well enough. A curious instance of this, by the by, occurred in Paris during the February Revolution. A fat English coachman went out, from mere curiosity, to see the fighting. As he stood and watched, a new passion crept over him; he grew madder and madder as the bullets whistled past him; at last, when men began to drop by his side, he could stand it no longer, seized a musket, and rushed in, careless which side he took, —

"To drink delight of battle with his peers."

He was not heard of for a day or two, and then they found him stiff and cold, lying on his face across a barricade, with a bullet through his heart. Sedentary persons may call him a sinful fool. Be it so. *Homo sum: humani nihil à me alienum puto.*

Lancelot, I verily believe, would have kept his promise, though he saw that the keepers gave ground, finding Cockney skill too much for their clumsy strength; but at last Harry Verney, who had been fighting as venomously as a wild cat, and had been once before saved from a broken skull by Tregarva, rolled over at his very feet with a couple of poachers on him.

"You won't see an old man murdered, Mr. Smith?" cried he, imploringly.

Lancelot tore the ruffians off the old man right and left. One of them struck him; he returned the blow; and, in an instant, promises and Argemone, philosophy and anti-game-law prejudices, were swept out of his head, and "he went" as the old romances say, "hurling into the midst of the press," as mere a wild animal for the moment as angry bull or boar. An instant afterwards, though, he burst out laughing, in spite of himself, as "The Battersea Bantam," who had been ineffectually dancing round Tregarva like a gamecock spurring at a bull, turned off with a voice of ineffable disgust:

"That big cove 's a yokel; ta'nt creditable to waste science on him. You 're my man, if you please, sir," — and the little wiry lump of courage and conceit, rascality and good humor, flew at Lancelot, who was twice his size, "with a heroism worthy of a better cause," as respectable papers,

when they are not too frightened, say of the French.

. . . . . .

"Do you want any more?" asked Lancelot.

"Quite a pleasure, sir, to meet a scientific gen'l'man. Beg your pardon, sir; stay a moment while I wipes my face. Now, sir, time, if you please."

Alas for the little man! in another moment he tumbled over and lay senseless — Lancelot thought he had killed him. The gang saw their champion fall, gave ground, and limped off, leaving three of their party groaning on the ground, beside as many Whitford men.

As it was in the beginning, so is it to be to the end, my foolish brothers! From the poacher to the prime minister — wearying yourselves for very vanity! The soldier is not the only man in England who is fool enough to be shot at for a shilling a day.

But while all the rest were busy picking up the wounded men and securing the prisoners, Harry Verney alone held on, and as the poachers retreated slowly up the ride, he followed them, peering into the gloom, as if in hopes of recognizing some old enemy.

"Stand back, Harry Verney; we know you, and we'd be loath to harm an old man," cried a voice out of the darkness.

"Eh? Do you think old Harry'd turn back when he was once on the track of ye? You soft-fisted, gin-drinking, counter-skipping Cockney rascals, that fancy you're to carry the county before you, because you get your fines paid by London-tradesmen! Eh? What do you take old Harry for?"

"Go back, you old fool!" and a volley of oaths followed. "If you follow us, we'll fire at you, as sure as the moon's in heaven!"

"Fire away, then! I'll follow you to ——!" and the old man paced stealthily but firmly up to them.

Tregarva saw his danger and sprang forward, but it was too late.

"What, you will have it, then?"

A sharp crack followed, — a bright flash in the darkness — every white birch-stem and jagged oak-leaf shone out for a moment as bright as day — and in front of the glare Lancelot saw the old man throw his arms wildly upward, fall forward, and disappear on the dark ground.

"You've done it! off with you!" And the rascals rushed off up the ride.

In a moment Tregarva was by the old man's side, and lifted him tenderly up.

"They've done for me, Paul. Old Harry's got his gruel. He's heard his last shot fired. I knowed it 'ud come to this, and I said it. Eh? Did n't I, now, Paul?" And as the old man spoke, the workings of his lungs pumped great jets of blood out over the still heather-flowers as they slept in the moonshine, and dabbled them with smoking gore.

"Here, men," shouted the colonel, "up with him at once, and home! Here, put a brace of your guns together, muzzle and lock. Help him to sit on them, Lancelot. There, Harry, put your arms round their necks. Tregarva, hold him up behind. Now then, men, left legs foremost — keep step — march!" And they moved off towards the Priory.

"You seem to know everything, colonel," said Lancelot.

The colonel did not answer for a moment.

"Lancelot, I learnt this dodge from the only friend I ever had in the world, or ever shall have; and a week after I marched him home to his deathbed in this very way."

"Paul — Paul Tregarva," whispered old Harry, "put your head down here: wipe my mouth, there's a man; it's wet, uncommon wet." It was his own life-blood. "I've been a beast to you, Paul. I've hated you, and envied you, and tried to ruin you. And now you've saved my life once this night; and here you be a-nursing of me as my own son might do, if he was here, poor fellow! I've ruined you, Paul; the Lord forgive me!"

"Pray! pray!" said Paul, "and He will forgive you. He is all mercy. He pardoned the thief on the cross ——"

"No, Paul, no thief, — not so bad as that, I hope, anyhow; never touched a feather of the squire's. But you dropped a song, Paul, a bit of writing."

Paul turned pale.

"And — the Lord forgive me! — I put it in the squire's fly-book."

"The Lord forgive you! Amen!" said Paul, solemnly.

Wearily and slowly they stepped on towards the old man's cottage. A messenger had gone on before, and in a few minutes the squire, Mrs. Lavington, and the girls were round the bed of their old retainer.

They sent off right and left for the doctor and

the vicar; the squire was in a frenzy of rage and grief.

"Don't take on, master, don't take on," said old Harry, as he lay; while the colonel and Honoria in vain endeavored to stanch the wound. "I knowed it would be so, sooner or later; 't is all in the way of business. They have n't carried off a bird, squire, not a bird; we was too many for 'em — eh, Paul, eh?"

"Where is that cursed doctor?" said the squire. "Save him, colonel, save him; and I 'll give you ——"

Alas! the charge of shot at a few feet distance had entered like a bullet, tearing a great ragged hole. — There was no hope, and the colonel knew it; but he said nothing.

"The second keeper," sighed Argemone, "who has been killed here! Oh, Mr. Smith, must this be? Is God's blessing on all this?"

Lancelot said nothing. The old man lighted up at Argemone's voice.

"There's the beauty, there's the pride of Whitford. And sweet Miss Honor, too, — so kind to nurse a poor old man! But she never would let him teach her to catch perch, would she? She was always too tender-hearted. Ah, squire, when we're dead and gone, — dead and gone, — squire, they 'll be the pride of Whitford still! And they 'll keep up the old place — won't you, my darlings? And the old name, too! For, you know, there must always be a Lavington in Whitford Priors, till the Nun's pool runs up to Ashy Down."

"And a curse upon the Lavingtons," sighed Argemone to herself in an undertone.

Lancelot heard what she said.

The vicar entered, but he was too late. The old man's strength was failing, and his mind began to wander.

"Windy," he murmured to himself, "windy, dark and windy — birds won't lie — not old Harry's fault. How black it grows! We must be gone by nightfall, squire. Where's that young dog gone? Arter the larks, the brute."

Old Squire Lavington sobbed like a child.

"You will soon be home, my man," said the vicar. "Remember that you have a Saviour in heaven. Cast yourself on His mercy."

Harry shook his head.

"Very good words, very kind, — very heavy gamebag, though. Never get home, never any more at all. Where's my boy Tom to carry it? Send for my boy Tom. He was always a good boy till he got along with them poachers."

. . . . . .

"Listen," he said, "listen! There's bells a-ringing — ringing in my head. Come you here, Paul Tregarva."

He pulled Tregarva's face down to his own, and whispered:

"Them's the bells a-ringing for Miss Honor's wedding."

Paul started and drew back. Harry chuckled and grinned for a moment in his old foxy, peering way, and then wandered off again.

"What's that thumping and roaring?" Alas! it was the failing pulsation of his own heart. "It's the weir, the weir — a-washing me away — thundering over me. — Squire, I'm drowning, — drowning and choking! Oh, Lord, how deep!

Now it 's running quieter — now I can breathe again — swift and oily — running on, running on, down to the sea. See how the grayling sparkle! There 's a pike! 'T ain't my fault, squire, so help me —— Don't swear, now, squire; old men and dying maun't swear, squire. How steady the river runs down! Lower and slower — lower and slower: now it 's quite still — still —— still ——"

His voice sank away — he was dead!

No! once more the light flashed up in the socket. He sprang upright in the bed, and held out his withered paw with a kind of wild majesty, as he shouted:

"There ain't such a head of hares on any manor in the county. And them's the last words of Harry Verney!"

He fell back — shuddered — a rattle in his throat — another — and all was over.

CHAPTER X

"MURDER WILL OUT," AND LOVE TOO

ARGEMONE need never have known of Lancelot's share in the poaching affray; but he dared not conceal anything from her. And so he boldly went up the next day to the Priory, not to beg pardon, but to justify himself, and succeeded. And, before long, he found himself fairly installed as her pupil, nominally in spiritual matters, but really in subjects of which she little dreamed.

Every day he came to read and talk with her, and whatever objections Mrs. Lavington expressed were silenced by Argemone. She would have it so, and her mother neither dared nor knew how to control her. The daughter had utterly out-read and out-thought her less educated parent, who was clinging in honest bigotry to the old forms, while Argemone was wandering forth over the chaos of the strange new age, — a poor homeless Noah's dove, seeking rest for the sole of her foot and finding none. And now all motherly influence and sympathy had vanished, and Mrs. Lavington, in fear and wonder, let her daughter go her own way. She could not have done better, perhaps; for Providence had found for Argemone a better guide than her mother could have done, and her new pupil was rapidly becoming her teacher. She was matched, for the first

time, with a man who was her own equal in intellect and knowledge; and she felt how real was that sexual difference which she had been accustomed to consider as an insolent calumny against woman. Proudly and indignantly she struggled against the conviction, but in vain. Again and again she argued with him, and was vanquished, — or, at least, what is far better, made to see how many different sides there are to every question. All appeals to authority he answered with a contemptuous smile. "The best authorities?" he used to say. "On what question do not the best authorities flatly contradict each other? And why? Because every man believes just what it suits him to believe. Don't fancy that men reason themselves into convictions; the prejudices and feelings of their hearts give them some idea or theory, and then they find facts at their leisure to prove their theory true. Every man sees facts through narrow spectacles, red, or green, or blue, as his nation or his temperament colors them: and he is quite right, only he must allow us the liberty of having our spectacles too. Authority is only good for proving facts. We must draw our own conclusions." And Argemone began to suspect that he was right, — at least to see that her opinions were mere hearsays, picked up at her own will and fancy; while his were living, daily-growing ideas. Her mind was beside his as the vase of cut flowers by the side of the rugged tree, whose roots are feeding deep in the mother earth. In him she first learnt how one great truth received into the depths of the soul germinates there, and bears fruit a thousand-fold; explaining, and connecting, and glorifying

innumerable things, apparently the most unlike and insignificant; and daily she became a more reverent listener, and gave herself up, half against her will and conscience, to the guidance of a man whom she knew to be her inferior in morals and in orthodoxy. She had worshipped intellect, and now it had become her tyrant; and she was ready to give up every belief which she once had prized, to flutter like a moth round its fascinating brilliance.

Who can blame her, poor girl? For Lancelot's humility was even more irresistible than his eloquence. He assumed no superiority. He demanded her assent to truths, not because they were his opinions, but simply for the truth's sake; and on all points which touched the heart he looked up to her as infallible and inspired. In questions of morality, of taste, of feeling, he listened not as a lover to his mistress, but rather as a baby to its mother; and thus, half unconsciously to himself, he taught her where her true kingdom lay, — that the heart, and not the brain, enshrines the priceless pearl of womanhood, the oracular jewel, the "Urim and Thummim," before which gross man can only inquire and adore.

And, in the meantime, a change was passing upon Lancelot. His morbid vanity — that brawl-begotten child of struggling self-conceit and self-disgust — was vanishing away; and as Mr. Tennyson says in one of those priceless idyls of his, before which the shade of Theocritus must hide his diminished head, —

> "He was altered, and began
> To move about the house with joy,
> And with the certain step of man."

He had, at last, found one person who could appreciate him. And in deliberate confidence he set to work to conquer her, and make her his own. It was a traitorous return, but a very natural one. And she, sweet creature! walked straight into the pleasant snare, utterly blind, because she fancied that she saw clearly. In the pride of her mysticism, she had fancied herself above so commonplace a passion as love. It was a curious feature of lower humanity, which she might investigate and analyze harmlessly as a cold scientific spectator; and, in her mingled pride and purity, she used to indulge Lancelot in metaphysical disquisitions about love and beauty, like that first one in their walk home from Minchampstead, from which a less celestially innocent soul would have shrunk. She thought, forsooth, as the old proverb says, that she could deal in honey, without putting her hand to her mouth. But Lancelot knew better, and marked her for his own. And daily his self-confidence and sense of rightful power developed, and with them, paradoxical as it may seem, the bitterest self-abasement. The contact of her stainless innocence, the growing certainty that the destiny of that innocence was irrevocably bound up with his own, made him shrink from her whenever he remembered his own guilty career. To remember that there were passages in it which she must never know — that she would cast him from her with abhorrence if she once really understood their vileness! To think that, amid all the closest bonds of love, there must forever be an awful, silent gulf in the past, of which they must never speak! — That she would bring to him what

he could never, never bring to her! — The thought was unbearable. And as hideous recollections used to rise before him, devilish caricatures of his former self, mopping and mowing at him in his dreams, he would start from his lonely bed, and pace the room for hours, or saddle his horse, and ride all night long aimlessly through the awful woods, vainly trying to escape himself. How gladly, at those moments, he would have welcomed centuries of a material hell, to escape from the more awful spiritual hell within him, — to buy back that pearl of innocence which he had cast recklessly to be trampled under the feet of his own swinish passions! But, no; that which was done could never be undone, — never, to all eternity. And more than once, as he wandered restlessly from one room to another, the barrels of his pistols seemed to glitter with a cold, devilish smile, and call to him:

"Come to us! and with one touch of your finger, send that bursting spirit which throbs against your brow to flit forth free, and nevermore to defile her purity by your presence!"

But no, again: a voice within seemed to command him to go on, and claim her, and win her, spite of his own vileness. And in after years, slowly, and in fear and trembling, he knew it for the voice of God, who had been leading him to become worthy of her through that bitter shame of his own unworthiness.

As One higher than they would have it, she took a fancy to read Homer in the original, and Lancelot could do no less than offer his services as translator. She would prepare for him portions of the Odyssey, and every day that he came up to

the Priory he used to comment on it to her; and so for many a week, in the dark wainscoted library, and in the clipt yew-alleys of the old gardens, and under the brown autumn trees, they quarried together in that unexhausted mine, among the records of the rich Titan-youth of man. And step by step Lancelot opened to her the everlasting significance of the poem; the unconscious purity which lingers in it, like the last rays of the Paradise dawn; its sense of the dignity of man as man; the religious reverence with which it speaks of all human ties, human strength and beauty — ay, even of merely animal human appetites, as God-given and God-like symbols. She could not but listen and admire, when he introduced her to the sheer paganism of Schiller's Gods of Greece; for on this subject he was more eloquent than on any. He had gradually, in fact, as we have seen, dropped all faith in anything but Nature; the slightest fact about a bone or a weed was more important to him than all the books of divinity which Argemone lent him — to be laid by unread.

"What *do* you believe in?" she asked him one day, sadly.

"In *this!*" he said, stamping his foot on the ground. "In the earth I stand on, and the things I see walking and growing on it. There may be something beside it — what you call a spiritual world. But if He who made me intended me to think of spirit first, He would have let me see it first. But as He has given me material senses, and put me in a material world, I take it as a fair hint that I am meant to use those senses first, whatever may come after. I may be intended

to understand the unseen world, but if so, it must be, as I suspect, by understanding the visible one: and there are enough wonders there to occupy me for some time to come."

"But the Bible?" (Argemone had given up long ago wasting words about the "Church.")

"My only Bible as yet is Bacon. I know that he is right, whoever is wrong. If that Hebrew Bible is to be believed by me, it must agree with what I know already from science."

What was to be done with so intractable a heretic? Call him an infidel and a materialist, of course, and cast him off with horror. But Argemone was beginning to find out that, when people are really in earnest, it may be better sometimes to leave God's methods of educating them alone, instead of calling the poor honest seekers hard names, which the speakers themselves don't understand.

But words would fail sometimes, and in default of them Lancelot had recourse to drawings, and manifested in them a talent for thinking in visible forms which put the climax to all Argemone's wonder. A single profile, even a mere mathematical figure, would, in his hands, become the illustration of a spiritual truth. And, in time, every fresh lesson on the Odyssey was accompanied by its illustration, — some bold and simple outline drawing. In Argemone's eyes, the sketches were immaculate and inspired; for their chief, almost their only fault, was just those mere anatomical slips which a woman would hardly perceive, provided the forms were generally graceful and bold.

One day his fancy attempted a bolder flight.

He brought a large pen-and-ink drawing, and laying it silently on the table before her, fixed his eyes intensely on her face. The sketch was labelled the "Triumph of Woman." In the foreground, to the right and left, were scattered groups of men, in the dresses and insignia of every period and occupation. The distance showed, in a few bold outlines, a dreary desert, broken by alpine ridges, and furrowed here and there by a wandering watercourse. Long shadows pointed to the half-risen sun, whose disc was climbing above the waste horizon. And in front of the sun, down the path of the morning beams, came Woman, clothed only in the armor of her own loveliness. Her bearing was stately, and yet modest; in her face pensive tenderness seemed wedded with earnest joy. In her right hand lay a cross, the emblem of self-sacrifice. Her path across the desert was marked by the flowers which sprang up beneath her steps; the wild gazelle stept forward trustingly to lick her hand; a single wandering butterfly fluttered round her head. As the group, one by one, caught sight of her, a human tenderness and intelligence seemed to light up every face. The scholar dropt his book, the miser his gold, the savage his weapons; even in the visage of the half-slumbering sot some nobler recollection seemed wistfully to struggle into life. The artist caught up his pencil, the poet his lyre, with eyes that beamed forth sudden inspiration. The sage, whose broad brow rose above the group like some torrent-furrowed Alp, scathed with all the temptations and all the sorrows of his race, watched with a thoughtful smile that preacher more mighty than

himself. A youth, decked out in the most fantastic fopperies of the middle age, stood with clasped hands and brimming eyes, as remorse and pleasure struggled in his face; and as he looked, the fierce sensual features seemed to melt, and his flesh came again to him like the flesh of a little child. The slave forgot his fetters; little children clapped their hands; and the toil-worn, stunted, savage woman sprung forward to kneel at her feet, and see herself transfigured in that new and divine ideal of her sex.

Descriptions of drawings are clumsy things at best; the reader must fill up the sketch for himself by the eye of faith.

Entranced in wonder and pleasure, Argemone let her eyes wander over the drawing. And her feelings for Lancelot amounted almost to worship, as she apprehended the harmonious unity of the manifold conception, — the rugged boldness of the groups in front, the soft grandeur of the figure which was the lodestar of all their emotions — the virginal purity of the whole. And when she fancied that she traced in those bland aquiline lineaments, and in the crisp ringlets which floated like a cloud down to the knees of her figure, some traces of her own likeness, a dream of a new destiny flitted before her, — she blushed to her very neck; and as she bent her face over the drawing and gazed, her whole soul seemed to rise into her eyes, and a single tear dropped upon the paper. She laid her hand over it, and then turned hastily away.

"You do not like it! I have been too bold," said Lancelot, fearfully.

"Oh, no! no! It is so beautiful — so full of deep wisdom! But — but —— You may leave it."

Lancelot slipped silently out of the room, he hardly knew why; and when he was gone, Argemone caught up the drawing, pressed it to her bosom, covered it with kisses, and hid it, as too precious for any eyes but her own, in the farthest corner of her secrétaire.

And yet she fancied that she was not in love!

The vicar saw the growth of this intimacy with a fast-lengthening face; for it was very evident that Argemone could not serve two masters so utterly contradictory as himself and Lancelot, and that either the lover or the father-confessor must speedily resign office. The vicar had had great disadvantages, by the by, in fulfilling the latter function; for his visits at the Priory had been all but forbidden; and Argemone's "spiritual state" had been directed by means of a secret correspondence, — a method which some clergymen, and some young ladies too, have discovered, in the last few years, to be quite consistent with moral delicacy and filial obedience. John Bull, like a stupid fellow as he is, has still his doubts upon the point; but he should remember that though St. Paul tells women when they want advice to ask their husbands at home, yet if the poor woman has no husband, or, as often happens, her husband's advice is unpleasant, to whom is she to go but to the next best substitute, her spiritual cicisbeo, or favorite clergyman? In sad earnest, neither husband nor parent deserves pity in the immense majority of such cases. Woman will have guidance. It is her delight and glory to be

led; and if her husband or her parents will not meet the cravings of her intellect, she must go elsewhere to find a teacher, and run into the wildest extravagances of private judgment, in the very hope of getting rid of it, just as poor Argemone had been led to do.

And, indeed, she had, of late, wandered into very strange paths: would to God they were as uncommon as strange! Both she and the vicar had a great wish that she should lead a "devoted life;" but then they both disdained to use common means for their object. The good old English plan of district visiting, by which ladies can have mercy on the bodies and souls of those below them, without casting off the holy discipline which a home, even the most ungenial, alone supplies, savored too much of mere "Protestantism." It might be God's plan for Christianizing England just now, but that was no reason, alas! for its being their plan: they wanted something more "Catholic," more in accordance with Church principles (for, indeed, is it not the business of the Church to correct the errors of Providence!); and what they sought they found at once in a certain favorite establishment of the vicar's, a Church-of-England *béguinage*, or quasi-Protestant nunnery, which he fostered in a neighboring city, and went thither on all high tides to confess the young ladies, who were in all things nuns, but bound by no vows, except, of course, such as they might choose to make for themselves in private.

Here they labored among the lowest haunts of misery and sin, piously and self-denyingly enough, sweet souls! in hope of "the peculiar crown,"

and a higher place in heaven than the relations whom they had left behind them "in the world," and unshackled by the interference of parents, and other such merely fleshly relationships, which, as they cannot have been instituted by God merely to be trampled under foot on the path to holiness, and cannot well have instituted themselves (unless, after all, the materialists are right, and this world does grind of itself, except when its Maker happens to interfere once every thousand years), must needs have been instituted by the devil. And so more than one girl in that nunnery, and out of it, too, believed in her inmost heart, though her "Catholic principles," by a happy inconsistency, forbade her to say so.

In a moment of excitement, fascinated by the romance of the notion, Argemone had proposed to her mother to allow her to enter this *béguinage*, and called in the vicar as advocate; which produced a correspondence between him and Mrs. Lavington, stormy on her side, provokingly calm on his: and when the poor lady, tired of raging, had descended to an affecting appeal to his human sympathies, entreating him to spare a mother's feelings, he had answered with the same impassive fanaticism, that "he was surprised at her putting a mother's selfish feelings in competition with the sanctity of her child," and that "had his own daughter shown such a desire for a higher vocation, he should have esteemed it the very highest honor;" to which Mrs. Lavington answered, naïvely enough, that "it depended very much on what his daughter was like." — So he was all but forbidden the house. Nevertheless

he contrived, by means of this same secret correspondence, to keep alive in Argemone's mind the longing to turn nun, and fancied honestly that he was doing God service, while he was pampering the poor girl's lust for singularity and self-glorification.

But, lately, Argemone's letters had become less frequent and less confiding; and the vicar, who well knew the reason, had resolved to bring the matter to a crisis.

So he wrote earnestly and peremptorily to his pupil, urging her, with all his subtle and refined eloquence, to make a final appeal to her mother, and if that failed, to act "as her conscience should direct her;" and enclosed an answer from the superior of the convent, to a letter which Argemone had in a mad moment asked him to write. The superior's letter spoke of Argemone's joining her as a settled matter, and of her room as ready for her, while it lauded to the skies the peaceful activity and usefulness of the establishment. This letter troubled Argemone exceedingly. She had never before been compelled to face her own feelings, either about the nunnery or about Lancelot. She had taken up the fancy of becoming a Sister of Charity, not as Honoria might have done, from genuine love of the poor, but from "a sense of duty." Almsgiving and visiting the sick were one of the methods of earning heaven prescribed by her new creed. She was ashamed of her own laziness by the side of Honoria's simple benevolence; and, sad though it may be to have to say it, she longed to outdo her by some signal act of self-sacrifice. She had looked to this nunnery, too, as an escape, once

and for all, from her own luxury, just as people who have not strength to be temperate take refuge in teetotalism; and the thought of menial services towards the poor, however distasteful to her, came in quite prettily to fill up the little ideal of a life of romantic asceticisms and mystic contemplation, which gave the true charm in her eyes to her wild project. But now — just as a field had opened to her cravings after poetry and art, wider and richer than she had ever imagined — just as those simple childlike views of man and nature, which she had learnt to despise, were assuming an awful holiness in her eyes — just as she had found a human soul to whose regeneration she could devote all her energies, — to be required to give all up, perhaps forever (and she felt that if at all, it ought to be forever); — it was too much for her little heart to bear; and she cried bitterly; and tried to pray, and could not; and longed for a strong and tender bosom on which to lay her head, and pour out all her doubts and struggles; and there was none. Her mother did not understand — hardly loved her. Honoria loved her, but understood her even less than her mother. Pride — the pride of intellect, the pride of self-will — had long since sealed her lips to her own family. . . .

And then, out of the darkness of her heart, Lancelot's image rose before her stronger than all, tenderer than all; and as she remembered his magical faculty of anticipating all her thoughts, embodying for her all her vague surmises, he seemed to beckon her towards him. — She shuddered and turned away. And now she first became conscious how he had haunted her thoughts

in the last few months, not as a soul to be saved, but as a living man — his face, his figure, his voice, his every gesture and expression, rising clear before her, in spite of herself, by day and night.

And then she thought of his last drawing, and the looks which had accompanied it, — unmistakable looks of passionate and adoring love. There was no denying it — she had always known that he loved her, but she had never dared to confess it to herself. But now the earthquake was come, and all the secrets of her heart burst upward to the light, and she faced the thought in shame and terror. "How unjust I have been to him! how cruel! thus to entice him on in hopeless love!"

She lifted up her eyes, and saw in the mirror opposite the reflection of her own exquisite beauty.

"I could have known what I was doing! I knew all the while! And yet it is so delicious to feel that any one loves me! Is it selfishness? It is selfishness, to pamper my vanity on an affection which I do not, will not return. I will not be thus in debt to him, even for his love. I do not love him — I do not; and even if I did, to give myself up to a man of whom I know so little, who is not even a Christian, much less a Churchman! Ay! and to give up my will to any man! to become the subject, the slave, of another human being! I, who have worshipped the belief in woman's independence, the hope of woman's enfranchisement, who have felt how glorious it is to live like the angels, single and self-sustained! What if I cut the Gordian knot, and

here make, once for all, a vow of perpetual celibacy?"

She flung herself on her knees — she could not collect her thoughts.

"No," she said, "I am not prepared for this. It is too solemn to be undertaken in this miserable whirlwind of passion. I will fast, and meditate, and go up formally to the little chapel, and there devote myself to God; and, in the meantime, to write at once to the superior of the *béguines;* to go to my mother, and tell her once for all —— What? Must I lose him? — must I give him up? Not his love — I cannot give up that — would that I could! but no! he will love me forever. I know it as well as if an angel told me. But to give up *him!* Never to see him! never to hear his voice! never to walk with him among the beech woods any more! Oh, Argemone! Argemone! miserable girl! and is it come to this?" And she threw herself on the sofa, and hid her face in her hands.

Yes, Argemone, it is come to this; and the best thing you can do, is just what you are doing — to lie there and cry yourself to sleep, while the angels are laughing kindly (if a solemn public, who settles everything for them, will permit them to laugh) at the rickety old windmill of sham-Popery which you have taken for a real giant.

At that same day and hour, as it chanced, Lancelot, little dreaming what the said windmill was grinding for him, was scribbling a hasty and angry answer to a letter of Luke's, which, perhaps, came that very morning in order to put him into a proper temper for the demolishing of windmills. It ran thus:

"Ay, my good Cousin, so I expected

"Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem . . .

Pleasant and easy for you Protestants (for I will call you what you are, in spite of your own denials, a truly consistent and logical Protestant — and therefore a Materialist) — easy for you, I say, to sit on the shore, in cold, cruel self-satisfaction, and tell the poor wretch buffeting with the waves what he ought to do while he is choking and drowning. . . . Thank Heaven, the storm has stranded me upon the everlasting Rock of Peter; — but it has been a sore trouble to reach it. Protestants, who look at creeds as things to be changed like coats, whenever they seem not to fit them, little know what we Catholic-hearted ones suffer. . . . If they did, they would be more merciful and more chary in the requirements of us, just as we are in the very throe of a newborn existence. The excellent man, to whose care I have committed myself, has a wise and a tender heart . . . he saw no harm in my concealing from my father the spiritual reason of my giving up my curacy (for I have given it up), and only giving the outward, but equally true reason, that I found it on the whole an ineligible and distressing post. . . . I know you will apply to such an act that disgusting monosyllable of which Protestants are so fond. He felt with me and for me — for my horror of giving pain to my father, and for my wearied and excited state of mind; and strangely enough — to show how differently, according to the difference of the organs, the same object may appear to two people — he quoted in my favor that very verse which you wrest against me. He wished me to show my father that I had only changed my heaven, and not my character, by becoming an Ultramontane-Catholic . . . that, as far as his esteem and affection were founded

on anything in me, the ground of it did not vanish with my conversion. If I had told him at once of my altered opinions, he would have henceforth viewed every word and action with a prejudiced eye. . . . Protestants are so bigoted . . . but if, after seeing me for a month or two the same Luke that he had ever known me, he were gradually informed that I had all the while held that creed which he had considered incompatible with such a life as I hoped mine would be — you must see the effect which it ought to have. . . . I don't doubt that you will complain of all this. . . . All I can say is, that I cannot sympathize with that superstitious reverence for mere verbal truth, which is so common among Protestants. . . . It seems to me they throw away the spirit of truth, in their idolatry of its letter. For instance, — what is the use of informing a man of a true fact but to induce a true opinion in him? But if, by clinging to the exact letter of the fact, you create a false opinion in his mind, as I should do in my father's case, if by telling him at once of my change, I gave him an unjust horror of Catholicism, — you do not tell him the truth. . . . You may speak what is true to you, — but it becomes an error when received into his mind. . . . If his mind is a refracting and polarizing medium — if the crystalline lens of his soul's eye has been changed into tourmaline or Labrador spar — the only way to give him a true image of the fact, is to present it to him already properly altered in form, and adapted to suit the obliquity of his vision; in order that the very refractive power of his faculties may, instead of distorting it, correct it, and make it straight for him; and so a verbal wrong in fact may possess him with a right opinion. . . .

"You see the whole question turns on your Protestant deification of the intellect. . . . If you really believed, as you all say you do, that the nature of man, and therefore his intellect among the rest, was utterly corrupt, you

would not be so superstitiously careful to tell the truth . . . as you call it; because you would know that man's heart, if not his head, would needs turn the truth into a lie by its own corruption. . . . The proper use of reasoning is to produce opinion, — and if the subject in which you wish to produce the opinion is diseased, you must adapt the medicine accordingly."

To all which Lancelot, with several strong curses, scrawled the following answer: —

"And this is my Cousin Luke! — Well, I shall believe henceforward that there is, after all, a thousand times greater moral gulf fixed between Popery and Tractarianism, than between Tractarianism and the extremest Protestantism. My dear fellow, — I won't bother you, by cutting up your charming ambiguous middle terms, which make reason and reasoning identical, or your theory that the office of reasoning is to induce opinions — (the devil take opinions, right or wrong — I want facts, faith in real facts!) — or about deifying the intellect — as if all sound intellect was not in itself divine light — a revelation to man of absolute laws independent of him, as the very heathens hold. But this I will do — thank you most sincerely for the compliment you pay us Cismontane heretics. We do retain some dim belief in a God — even I am beginning to believe in believing in Him. And therefore, as I begin to suppose, it is, that we reverence facts, as the work of God, His acted words and will, which we dare not falsify; which we believe will tell their own story better than we can tell it for them. If our eyes are dimmed, we think it safer to clear them, which do belong to us, than to bedevil, by the light of those very *already dimmed* eyes, the objects round, which do not belong to us. Whether we are consistent or not about the corruptness of man, we are about the incorruptness of God; and therefore

about that of the facts by which God teaches men: and believe, and will continue to believe, that the blackest of all sins, the deepest of all Atheisms, that which, above all things, proves no faith in God's government of the universe, no sense of His presence, no understanding of His character, is — a lie.

"One word more — Unless you tell your father within twenty-four hours after receiving this letter, I will. And I, being a Protestant (if cursing Popery means Protestantism), mean what I say."

As Lancelot walked up to the Priory that morning, the Reverend Panurgus O'Blareaway dashed out of a cottage by the roadside, and seized him unceremoniously by the shoulders. He was a specimen of humanity which Lancelot could not help at once liking and despising; a quaint mixture of conceit and earnestness, uniting the shrewdness of a stockjobber with the frolic of a schoolboy broke loose. He was rector of a place in the west of Ireland, containing some ten Protestants and some thousand Papists. Being, unfortunately for himself, a red-hot Orangeman, he had thought fit to quarrel with the priest, in consequence of which he found himself deprived both of tithes and congregation; and after receiving three or four Rockite letters, and a charge of slugs through his hat (of which he always talked as if being shot at was the most pleasant and amusing feature of Irish life), he repaired to England, and there, after trying to set up as popular preacher in London, declaiming at Exeter Hall, and writing for all the third-rate magazines, found himself incumbent of Lower Whitford. He worked there, as he said himself, "like a horse;" spent his mornings in

the schools, his afternoons in the cottages; preached four or five extempore sermons every week to overflowing congregations; took the lead, by virtue of the "gift of the gab," at all "religious" meetings for ten miles round; and really did a great deal of good in his way. He had an unblushing candor about his own worldly ambition, with a tremendous brogue; and prided himself on exaggerating deliberately both of these excellences.

"The top of the morning to ye, Mr. Smith. Ye have n't such a thing as a cegar about ye? I 've been preaching to school-children till me throat 's as dry as the slave of a lime-burner's coat."

"I am very sorry; but, really, I have left my case at home."

"Oh! ah! faix and I forgot. Ye must n't be smokin' the nasty things going up to the castle. Och, Mr. Smith, but you 're the lucky man!"

"I am much obliged to you for the compliment," said Lancelot, gruffly; "but really I don't see how I deserve it."

"Desarve it! Sure luck 's all, and that 's your luck, and not your deserts at all. To have the handsomest girl in the county dying for love of ye" (Panurgus had a happy knack of blurting out truths — when they were pleasant ones). "And she just the beautifulest creature that ever spilte shoe-leather, barring Lady Philandria Mountflunkey, of Castle Mountflunkey, Quane's County, that shall be nameless."

"Upon my word, O'Blareaway, you seem to be better acquainted with my matters than I am. Don't you think, on the whole, it might be better to mind your own business?"

"Me own business! Poker o' Moses! and ain't it me own business? Have n't ye spilte my tenderest hopes? And good luck to ye in that same, for ye're as pretty a rider as ever kicked coping-stones out of a wall; and poor Paddy loves a sportsman by nature. Och! but ye've got a hand of trumps this time. Did n't I mate the vicar the other day, and spake my mind to him?"

"What do you mean?" asked Lancelot, with a strong expletive.

"Faix, I told him he might as well *Faugh a ballagh* — make a rid road, and get out of that, with his bowings and his crossings, and his Popery made asy for small minds, for there was a gun a-field that would wipe his eye, — maning yourself, ye Prathestant."

"All I can say is, that you had really better mind your own business, and I 'll mind my own."

"Och," said the good-natured Irishman, "and it 's you must mind my business, and I 'll mind yours; and that 's all fair and aqual. Ye've cut me out intirely at the Priory, ye Tory, and so ye're bound to give me a lift somehow. Could n't ye look me out a fine fat widow, with an illigant little fortune? For what 's England made for except to find poor Paddy a wife and money? Ah, ye may laugh, but I 'd buy me a chapel at the West End: me talents are thrown away here intirely, wasting me swateness on the desert air, as Tom Moore says" (Panurgus used to attribute all quotations whatsoever to Irish geniuses); "and I flatter meself I 'm the boy to shute the Gospel to the aristocracy."

Lancelot burst into a roar of laughter, and

escaped over the next gate: but the Irishman's coarse hints stuck by him as they were intended to do. "Dying for the love of me!" He knew it was an impudent exaggeration, but, somehow, it gave him confidence; "there is no smoke," he thought, "without fire." And his heart beat high with new hopes, for which he laughed at himself all the while. It was just the cordial which he needed. That conversation determined the history of his life.

He met Argemone that morning in the library, as usual; but he soon found that she was not thinking of Homer. She was moody and abstracted; and he could not help at last saying:

"I am afraid I and my classics are *de trop* this morning, Miss Lavington."

"Oh, no, no. Never that." She turned away her head. He fancied that it was to hide a tear.

Suddenly she rose, and turned to him with a clear, calm, gentle gaze.

"Listen to me, Mr. Smith. We must part to-day, and forever. This intimacy has gone on — too long, I am afraid, for your happiness. And now, like all pleasant things in this miserable world, it must cease. I cannot tell you why; but you will trust me. I thank you for it — I thank God for it. I have learnt things from it which I shall never forget. I have learnt, at least from it, to esteem and honor you. You have vast powers. Nothing, nothing, I believe, is too high for you to attempt and succeed. But we must part; and now, God be with you. Oh, that you would but believe that these glorious talents are His loan! That you would but be a true and loyal knight to Him who said — 'Learn

of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls!' — Ay," she went on, more and more passionately, for she felt that not she, but One mightier than herself was speaking through her, "then you might be great indeed. Then I might watch your name from afar, rising higher and higher daily in the ranks of God's own heroes. I see it — and you have taught me to see it — that you are meant for a faith nobler and deeper than all doctrines and systems can give. You must become the philosopher, who can discover new truths — the artist who can embody them in new forms, while poor I —— And that is another reason why we should part. — Hush! hear me out. I must not be a clog, to drag you down in your course. Take this, and farewell; and remember that you once had a friend called Argemone."

She put into his hands a little Bible. He took it, and laid it down on the table.

For a minute he stood silent and rooted to the spot. Disappointment, shame, rage, hatred, all boiled up madly within him. The bitterest insults rose to his lips — "Flirt, cold-hearted pedant, fanatic!" but they sank again unspoken, as he looked into the celestial azure of those eyes, calm and pure as a soft evening sky. A mighty struggle between good and evil shook his heart to the roots; and, for the first time in his life, his soul breathed out one real prayer, that God would help him now or never to play the man. And in a moment the darkness passed; a new spirit called out all the latent strength within him; and gently and proudly he answered her:

"Yes, I will go. I have had mad dreams, conceited and insolent, and have met with my deserts. Brute and fool as I am, I have aspired even to you! And I have gained, in the sunshine of your condescension, strength and purity. — Is not that enough for me? And now I will show you that I love you — by obeying you. You tell me to depart — I go forever."

He turned away. Why did she almost spring after him?

"Lancelot! one word! Do not misunderstand me, as I know you will. You will think me so cold, heartless, fickle. — Oh, you do not know — you never can know — how much I, too, have felt!"

He stopped, spell-bound. In an instant his conversation with the Irishman flashed up before him with new force and meaning. A thousand petty incidents, which he had driven contemptuously from his mind, returned as triumphant evidences; and, with an impetuous determination, he cried out:

"I see — I see it all, Argemone! We love each other! You are mine, never to be parted!"

What was her womanhood, that it could stand against the energy of his manly will! The almost coarse simplicity of his words silenced her with a delicious violence. She could only bury her face in her hands and sob out:

"Oh, Lancelot, Lancelot, whither are you forcing me?"

"I am forcing you no whither. God, the Father of spirits, is leading you! You, who believe in Him, how dare you fight against Him?"

"Lancelot, I cannot — I cannot listen to you

— read that!" And she handed him the vicar's letter. He read it, tossed it on the carpet, and crushed it with his heel.

"Wretched pedant! Can your intellect be deluded by such barefaced sophistries? 'God's will,' forsooth! And if your mother's opposition is not a sign that God's will — if it mean anything except your own will, or that — that man's — is against this mad project, and not for it, what sign would you have? So 'celibacy is the highest state!' And why? Because 'it is the safest and the easiest road to heaven?' A pretty reason, vicar! I should have thought that that was a sign of a lower state and not a higher. Noble spirits show their nobleness by daring the most difficult paths. And even if marriage was but one weed-field of temptations, as these miserable pedants say, who have either never tried it, or misused it to their own shame, it would be a greater deed to conquer its temptations than to flee from them in cowardly longings after ease and safety!"

She did not answer him, but kept her face buried in her hands.

"Again, I say, Argemone, will you fight against Fate — Providence — God — call it what you will? Who made us meet at the chapel? Who made me, by my accident, a guest in your father's house? Who put it into your heart to care for my poor soul? Who gave us this strange attraction towards each other, in spite of our unlikeness? Wonderful that the very chain of circumstances which you seem to fancy the offspring of chance or the devil, should have first taught me to believe that there is a God who

guides us! Argemone! speak, tell me, if you will, to go forever; but tell me first the truth — You love me!"

A strong shudder ran through her frame — the ice of artificial years cracked, and the clear stream of her woman's nature welled up to the light, as pure as when she first lay on her mother's bosom: she lifted up her eyes, and with one long look of passionate tenderness she faltered out:

"I love you!"

He did not stir, but watched her with clasped hands, like one who in dreams finds himself in some fairy palace, and fears that a movement may break the spell.

"Now, go," she said; "go, and let me collect my thoughts. All this has been too much for me. Do not look sad — you may come again to-morrow."

She smiled and held out her hand. He caught it, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to his heart. She half drew it back, frightened. The sensation was new to her. Again the delicious feeling of being utterly in his power came over her, and she left her hand upon his heart, and blushed as she felt its passionate throbbings.

He turned to go — not as before. She followed with greedy eyes her new-found treasure; and as the door closed behind him, she felt as if Lancelot was the whole world, and there was nothing beside him, and wondered how a moment had made him all in all to her; and then she sank upon her knees, and folded her hands upon her bosom, and her prayers for him were like the prayers of a little child.

CHAPTER XI

THUNDERSTORM THE FIRST

BUT what had become of the "bit of writing" which Harry Verney, by the instigation of his evil genius, had put into the squire's fly-book? Tregarva had waited in terrible suspense for many weeks, expecting the explosion which he knew must follow its discovery. He had confided to Lancelot the contents of the paper, and Lancelot had tried many stratagems to get possession of it, but all in vain. Tregarva took this as calmly as he did everything else. Only once, on the morning of the *éclaircissement* between Lancelot and Argemone, he talked to Lancelot of leaving his place, and going out to seek his fortune; but some spell, which he did not explain, seemed to chain him to the Priory. Lancelot thought it was the want of money, and offered to lend him ten pounds whenever he liked; but Tregarva shook his head.

"You have treated me, sir, as no one else has done — like a man and a friend; but I am not going to make a market of your generosity. I will owe no man anything, save to love one another."

"But how do you intend to live?" asked Lancelot, as they stood together in the cloisters.

"There's enough of me, sir, to make a good navigator if all trades fail."

"Nonsense! you must not throw yourself away so."

"Oh, sir, there's good to be done, believe me, among those poor fellows. They wander up and down the land like hogs and heathens, and no one tells them that they have a soul to be saved. Not one parson in a thousand gives a thought to them. They can manage old folks and little children, sir, but, somehow, they never can get hold of the young men — just those who want them most. There's a talk about ragged schools, now. Why don't they try ragged churches, sir, and a ragged service?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, sir, the parsons are ready enough to save souls, but it must be only according to rule and regulation. Before the Gospel can be preached there must be three thousand pounds got together for a church, and a thousand for an endowment, not to mention the thousand pounds that the clergyman's education costs: I don't think of his own keep, sir; that's little enough, often; and those that work hardest get least pay, it seems to me. But after all that expense, when they've built the church, it's the tradesmen, and the gentry, and the old folk that fill it, and the working men never come near it from one year's end to another."

"What's the cause, do you think?" asked Lancelot, who had himself remarked the same thing more than once.

"Half of the reason, sir, I do believe, is that same Prayer-book. Not that the Prayer-book ain't a fine book enough, and a true one; but don't you see, sir, to understand the virtue of it, the poor fellows ought to be already just what you want to make them."

"You mean that they ought to be thorough Christians already, to appreciate the spirituality of the liturgy."

"You 've hit it, sir. And see what comes of the present plan; how a navvy drops into a church by accident, and there he has to sit like a fish out of water, through that hour's service, staring or sleeping, before he can hear a word that he understands; and, sir, when the sermon does come at last, it's not many of them can make much out of those fine book-words and long sentences. Why don't they have a short simple service, now and then, that might catch the ears of the roughs and the blowens, without tiring out the poor thoughtless creatures' patience, as they do now?"

"Because," said Lancelot, — "because — I really don't know why. — But I think there is a simpler plan than even a ragged service."

"What, then, sir?"

"Field-preaching. If the mountain won't come to Mahomet, let Mahomet go to the mountain."

"Right, sir; right you are. 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in.' And why are they to speak to them only one by one? Why not by the dozen and the hundred? We Wesleyans know, sir, — for the matter of that, every soldier knows, — what virtue there is in getting a lot of men together; how good and evil spread like wildfire through a crowd; and one man, if you can stir him up, will become leaven to leaven the whole lump. Oh why, sir, are they so afraid of field-preaching? Was not their Master and mine the prince of all field-preachers? Think, if the Apostles had waited to collect subscriptions

for a church before they spoke to the poor heathens, where should we have been now?"

Lancelot could not but agree. But at that moment a footman came up, and, with a face half laughing, half terrified, said:

"Tregarva, master wants you in the study. And please, sir, I think you had better go in too; master knows you're here, and you might speak a word for good, for he's raging like a mad bull."

"I knew it would come at last," said Tregarva, quietly, as he followed Lancelot into the house.

It had come at last. The squire was sitting in his study, purple with rage, while his daughters were trying vainly to pacify him. All the men-servants, grooms, and helpers were drawn up in line along the wall, and greeted Tregarva, whom they all heartily liked, with sly and sorrowful looks of warning.

"Here, you sir; you ——, look at this! Is this the way you repay me? I, who have kept you out of the workhouse, treated you like my own child? And then to go and write filthy, rascally, Radical ballads on me and mine! This comes of your Methodism, you canting, sneaking hypocrite! — you viper — you adder — you snake — you ——!" And the squire, whose vocabulary was not large, at a loss for another synonym, rounded off his oration by a torrent of oaths; at which Argemone, taking Honoria's hand, walked proudly out of the room, with one glance at Lancelot of mingled shame and love. "This is your handwriting, you villain! you know it" (and the squire tossed the fatal paper across the table); "though I suppose you'll lie about it. How can

you depend on fellows who speak evil of their betters? But all the servants are ready to swear it's your handwriting."

"Beg your pardon, sir," interposed the old butler, "we did n't quite say that; but we 'll all swear it is n't ours."

"The paper is mine," said Tregarva.

"Confound your coolness! He's no more ashamed of it than —— Read it out, Smith, read it out every word; and let them all hear how this pauper, this ballad-singing vagabond, whom I have bred up to insult me, dares to abuse his own master."

"I have not abused you, sir," answered Tregarva. "I will be heard, sir!" he went on in a voice which made the old man start from his seat and clench his fist; but he sat down again. "Not a word in it is meant for you. You have been a kind and a good master to me. Ask where you will if I was ever heard to say a word against you. I would have cut off my right hand sooner than write about you or yours. But what I had to say about others lies there, and I am not ashamed of it."

"Not against me? Read it out, Smith, and see if every word of it don't hit at me, and at my daughters, too, by ——, worst of all! Read it out, I say!"

Lancelot hesitated; but the squire, who was utterly beside himself, began to swear at him also, as masters of hounds are privileged to do; and Lancelot, to whom the whole scene was becoming every moment more and more intensely ludicrous, thought it best to take up the paper and begin: —

"A ROUGH RHYME ON A ROUGH MATTER.

"The merry brown hares came leaping
Over the crest of the hill,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
Under the moonlight still.

"Leaping late and early,
Till under their bite and their tread
The swedes, and the wheat, and the barley
Lay cankered, and trampled, and dead.

"A poacher's widow sat sighing
On the side of the white chalk bank,
Where under the gloomy fir-woods
One spot in the ley throve rank.

"She watched a long tuft of clover,
Where rabbit or hare never ran;
For its black sour haulm covered over
The blood of a murdered man.

"She thought of the dark plantation,
And the hares and her husband's blood,
And the voice of her indignation
Rose up to the throne of God.

"'I am long past wailing and whining —
I have wept too much in my life:
I 've had twenty years of pining
As an English laborer's wife.

"'A laborer in Christian England,
Where they cant of a Saviour's name,
And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's
For a few more brace of game.

"'There 's blood on your new foreign shrubs, squire;
There 's blood on your pointer's feet;
There 's blood on the game you sell, squire,
And there 's blood on the game you eat!'"

"You villain!" interposed the squire, "when did I ever sell a head of game?"

"'You have sold the laboring man, squire,
Body and soul to shame,
To pay for your seat in the House, squire,
And to pay for the feed of your game.

"'You made him a poacher yourself, squire,
When you 'd give neither work nor meat;
And your barley-fed hares robbed the garden
At our starving children's feet;

"'When packed in one reeking chamber,
Man, maid, mother, and little ones lay;
While the rain pattered in on the rotting bride-bed,
And the walls let in the day;

"'When we lay in the burning fever
On the mud of the cold clay floor,
Till you parted us all for three months, squire,
At the cursed workhouse door.

"'We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders?
What self-respect could we keep,
Worse housed than your hacks and your pointers,
Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep?'"

"And yet he has the impudence to say he don't mean me!" grumbled the old man. Tregarva winced a good deal — as if he knew what was coming next; and then looked up relieved when he found Lancelot had omitted a stanza — which I shall not omit.

"'Our daughters with base-born babies
Have wandered away in their shame;
If your misses had slept, squire, where they did,
Your misses might do the same.

"'Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking
With handfuls of coals and rice,
Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting
A little below cost price?

"'You may tire of the gaol and the workhouse,
And take to allotments and schools,
But you've run up a debt that will never
Be repaid us by penny-club rules.

"'In the season of shame and sadness,
In the dark and dreary day
When scrofula, gout, and madness
Are eating your race away;

"'When to kennels and liveried varlets
You have cast your daughters' bread;
And worn out with liquor and harlots,
Your heir at your feet lies dead;

"'When your youngest, the mealy-mouthed rector,
Lets your soul rot asleep to the grave,
You will find in your God the protector
Of the freeman you fancied your slave.'

"She looked at the tuft of clover,
And wept till her heart grew light;
And at last, when her passion was over,
Went wandering into the night.

"But the merry brown hares came leaping
Over the uplands still,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
On the side of the white chalk hill."

"Surely, sir," said Lancelot, "you cannot suppose that this latter part applies to you or your family?"

"If it don't, it applies to half the gentlemen in the vale, and that's just as bad. What right has

the fellow to speak evil of dignities?" continued he, quoting the only text in the Bible which he was inclined to make a "rule absolute." "What does such an insolent dog deserve? What don't he deserve, I say?"

"I think," quoth Lancelot, ambiguously, "that a man who can write such ballads is not fit to be your gamekeeper, and I think he feels so himself;" and Lancelot stole an encouraging look at Tregarva.

"And I say, sir," the keeper answered, with an effort, "that I leave Mr. Lavington's service here on the spot, once and for all."

"And that you may do, my fine fellow!" roared the squire. "Pay the rascal his wages, steward, and then duck him soundly in the weir-pool. He had better have stayed there when he fell in last."

"So I had, indeed, I think. But I'll take none of your money. The day Harry Verney was buried I vowed that I'd touch no more of the wages of blood. I'm going, sir; I never harmed you, or meant a hard word of all this for you, or dreamt that you or any living soul would ever see it. But what I've seen myself, in spite of myself, I've set down here, and am not ashamed of it. And woe," he went on with an almost prophetic solemnity in his tone and gesture — "woe to those who do these things! and woe to those also who, though they dare not do them themselves, yet excuse and defend them who dare, just because the world calls them gentlemen, and not tyrants and oppressors."

He turned to go. The squire, bursting with passion, sprang up with a terrible oath, turned

deadly pale, staggered, and dropped senseless on the floor.

They all rushed to lift him up. Tregarva was the first to take him in his arms and place him tenderly in his chair, where he lay back with glassy eyes, snoring heavily in a fit of apoplexy.

"Go; for God's sake, go," whispered Lancelot to the keeper, "and wait for me at Lower Whitford. I must see you before you stir."

The keeper slipped away sadly. The ladies rushed in — a groom galloped off for the doctor — met him luckily in the village, and, in a few minutes, the squire was bled and put to bed, and showed hopeful signs of returning consciousness. And as Argemone and Lancelot leant together over his pillow, her hair touched her lover's, and her fragrant breath was warm upon his cheek; and her bright eyes met his and drank light from them, like glittering planets gazing at their sun.

The obnoxious ballad produced the most opposite effects on Argemone and on Honoria. Argemone, whose reverence for the formalities and the respectabilities of society, never very great, had, of late, utterly vanished before Lancelot's bad counsel, could think of it only as a work of art, and conceived the most romantic longing to raise Tregarva into some station where his talents might have free play. To Honoria, on the other hand, it appeared only as a very fierce, coarse, and impertinent satire, which had nearly killed her father. True, there was not a thought in it which had not at some time or other crossed her own mind; but that made her dislike all the more to see those thoughts put into plain English. That very in-

tense tenderness and excitability which made her toil herself among the poor, and had called out both her admiration of Tregarva and her extravagant passion at his danger, made her also shrink with disgust from anything which thrust on her a painful reality which she could not remedy. She was a stanch believer, too, in that peculiar creed which allows every one to feel for the poor, except themselves, and considers that to plead the cause of workingmen is, in a gentleman, the perfection of virtue, but in a workingman himself, sheer high treason. And so beside her father's sick-bed she thought of the keeper only as a scorpion whom she had helped to warm into life; and sighing assent to her mother, when she said, "That wretch, and he seemed so pious and so obliging! who would have dreamt that he was such a horrid Radical?" she let him vanish from her mind and out of Whitford Priors, little knowing the sore weight of manly love he bore with him.

As soon as Lancelot could leave the Priory, he hastened home to find Tregarva. The keeper had packed up all his small possessions and brought them down to Lower Whitford, through which the London coach passed. He was determined to go to London and seek his fortune. He talked of turning coal-heaver, Methodist preacher, anything that came to hand, provided that he could but keep independence and a clear conscience. And all the while the man seemed to be struggling with some great purpose, — to feel that he had a work to do, though what it was, and how it was to be done, he did not see.

"I am a tall man," he said, "like Saul the son of Kish; and I am going forth, like him, sir, to

find my father's asses. I doubt I sha'n't have to look far for some of them."

"And perhaps," said Lancelot, laughing, "to find a kingdom."

"May be so, sir. I have found one already, by God's grace, and I'm much mistaken if I don't begin to see my way towards another."

"And what is that?"

"The kingdom of God on earth, sir, as well as in heaven. Come it must, sir, and come it will some day."

Lancelot shook his head.

Tregarva lifted up his eyes and said:

"Are we not taught to pray for the coming of His kingdom, sir? And do you fancy that He who gave the lesson would have set all mankind to pray for what He never meant should come to pass?"

Lancelot was silent. The words gained a new and blessed meaning in his eyes.

"Well," he said, "the time, at least, of their fulfilment is far enough off. Union-workhouses and child-murder don't lo k much like it. Talking of that, Tregarva, what is to become of your promise to take me to a village wake, and show me what the poor are like?"

"I can keep it this night, sir. There is a revel at Bonesake, about five miles up the river. Will you go with a discharged gamekeeper?"

"I will go with Paul Tregarva, whom I honor and esteem as one of God's own noblemen; who has taught me what a man can be, and what I am not,"—and Lancelot grasped the keeper's hand warmly. Tregarva brushed his hand across his eyes, and answered;

"'I said in my haste, All men are liars;' and God has just given me the lie back in my own teeth. Well, sir, we will go to-night. You are not ashamed of putting on a smock-frock? For if you go as a gentleman, you will hear no more of them than a hawk does of a covey of partridges."

So the expedition was agreed on, and Lancelot and the keeper parted until the evening.

But why had the vicar been rumbling on all that morning through pouring rain, on the top of the London coach? And why was he so anxious in his inquiries as to the certainty of catching the up-train? Because he had had considerable experience in that wisdom of the serpent, whose combination with the innocence of the dove, in somewhat ultramontane proportions, is recommended by certain late leaders of his school. He had made up his mind, after his conversation with the Irishman, that he must either oust Lancelot at once, or submit to be ousted by him, and he was now on his way to Lancelot's uncle and trustee, the London banker.

He knew that the banker had some influence with his nephew, whose whole property was invested in the bank, and who had besides a deep respect for the kindly and upright practical mind of the veteran Mammonite. And the vicar knew, too, that he himself had some influence with the banker, whose son Luke had been his pupil at college. And when the young man lay sick of a dangerous illness, brought on by debauchery, into which weakness rather than vice had tempted him, the vicar had watched and prayed by his bed, nursed him as tenderly as a mother, and so won over his better heart that he

became completely reclaimed, and took holy orders with the most earnest intention to play the man therein, as repentant rakes will often do, half from a mere revulsion to asceticism, half from real gratitude for their deliverance. This good deed had placed the banker in the vicar's debt, and he loved and reverenced him in spite of his dread of "Popish novelties." And now the good priest was going to open to him just as much of his heart as should seem fit; and by saying a great deal about Lancelot's evil doings, opinions, and companions, and nothing at all about the heiress of Whitford, persuade the banker to use all his influence in drawing Lancelot up to London, and leaving a clear stage for his plans on Argemone. He caught the up-train, he arrived safe and sound in town, but what he did there must be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THUNDERSTORM THE SECOND

WEARY with many thoughts, the vicar came to the door of the bank. There were several carriages there, and a crowd of people swarming in and out, like bees round a hive-door, entering with anxious faces, and returning with cheerful ones, to stop and talk earnestly in groups round the door. Every moment the mass thickened — there was a run on the bank.

An old friend accosted him on the steps:

"What! have you, too, money here, then?"

"Neither here nor anywhere else, thank Heaven!" said the vicar. "But is anything wrong?"

"Have not you heard? The house has sustained a frightful blow this week — railway speculations, so they say — and is hardly expected to survive the day. So we are all getting our money out as fast as possible."

"By way of binding up the bruised reed, eh?"

"Oh! every man for himself. A man is under no obligation to his banker, that I know of." And the good man bustled off with his pockets full of gold.

The vicar entered. All was hurry and anxiety. The clerks seemed trying to brazen out their

own terror, and shovelled the rapidly lessening gold and notes across the counter with an air of indignant *nonchalance.* The vicar asked to see the principal.

"If you want your money, sir——" answered the official, with a disdainful look.

"I want no money. I must see Mr. Smith on private business, and instantly."

"He is particularly engaged."

"I know it, and, therefore, I must see him. Take in my card, and he will not refuse me." A new vista had opened itself before him.

He was ushered into a private room: and, as he waited for the banker, he breathed a prayer. For what? That his own will might be done—a very common style of petition.

Mr. Smith entered, hurried and troubled. He caught the vicar eagerly by the hand, as if glad to see a face which did not glare on him with the cold selfish stamp of "business," and then drew back again, afraid to commit himself by any sign of emotion.

The vicar had settled his plan of attack, and determined boldly to show his knowledge of the banker's distress.

"I am very sorry to trouble you at such an unfortunate moment, sir, and I will be brief; but, as your nephew's spiritual pastor——" (He knew the banker was a stout Churchman.)

"What of my nephew, sir! No fresh misfortunes, I hope?"

"Not so much misfortune, sir, as misconduct—I might say frailty—but frailty which may become ruinous."

"How? how? Some *mésalliance?*" interrupted

Mr. Smith, in a peevish, excited tone. "I thought there was some heiress on the *tapis* — at least, so I heard from my unfortunate son, who has just gone over to Rome. There's another misfortune. — Nothing but misfortunes; and your teaching, sir, by the by, I am afraid, has helped me to that one."

"Gone over to Rome?" asked the vicar, slowly.

"Yes, sir, gone to Rome — to the Pope, sir! to the devil, sir! I should have thought you likely to know of it before I did!"

The vicar stared fixedly at him a moment, and burst into honest tears. The banker was moved.

"'Pon my honor, sir, I beg your pardon. I did not mean to be rude, but — but —— To be plain with a clergyman, sir, so many things coming together have quite unmanned me. Pooh, pooh," and he shook himself as if to throw off a weight; and, with a face once more quiet and business-like, asked, "And now, my dear sir, what of my nephew?"

"As for that young lady, sir, of whom you spoke, I can assure you, once for all, as her clergyman, and therefore more or less her confidant, that your nephew has not the slightest chance or hope in that quarter."

"How, sir? You will not throw obstacles in the way?"

"Heaven, sir, I think, has interposed far more insuperable obstacles — in the young lady's own heart — than I could ever have done. Your nephew's character and opinions, I am sorry to say, are not such as are likely to command the respect and affection of a pure and pious Churchwoman."

"Opinions, sir? What, is he turning Papist, too?"

"I am afraid, sir, and more than afraid, for he makes no secret of it himself, that his views tend rather in the opposite direction; to an infidelity so subversive of the commonest principles of morality, that I expect, weekly, to hear of some unblushing and disgraceful outrage against decency, committed by him under its fancied sanction. And you know, as well as myself, the double danger of some profligate outbreak, which always attends the miseries of a disappointed earthly passion."

"True, very true. We must get the boy out of the way, sir. I must have him under my eye."

"Exactly so, sir," said the subtle vicar, who had been driving at this very point. "How much better for him to be here, using his great talents to the advantage of his family in an honorable profession, than to remain where he is, debauching body and mind by hopeless dreams, godless studies, and frivolous excesses."

"When do you return, sir?"

"An hour hence, if I can be of service to you."

The banker paused a moment.

"You are a gentleman" (with emphasis on the word), "and as such I can trust you."

"Say, rather, as a clergyman."

"Pardon me, but I have found your cloth give little additional cause for confidence. I have been as much bitten by clergymen — I have seen as sharp practice among them, in money matters as well as in religious squabbles, as I have in any class. Whether it is that their book education leaves them very often ignorant of the plain

rules of honor which bind men of the world, or whether their zeal makes them think that the end justifies the means, I cannot tell; but ——"

"But," said the vicar, half smiling, half severely, "you must not disparage the priesthood before a priest."

"I know it, I know it; and I beg your pardon: but if you knew the cause I have to complain. The slipperiness, sir, of one staggering parson has set rolling this very avalanche, which gathers size every moment, and threatens to overwhelm me now, unless that idle dog Lancelot will condescend to bestir himself, and help me."

The vicar heard, but said nothing.

"Me, at least, you can trust," he answered proudly; and honestly, too — for he was a gentleman by birth and breeding, unselfish and chivalrous to a fault — and yet, when he heard the banker's words, it was as if the inner voice had whispered to him, "Thou art the man!"

"When do you go down?" again asked Mr. Smith. "To tell you the truth, I was writing to Lancelot when you were announced! but the post will not reach him till to-morrow at noon, and we are all so busy here, that I have no one whom I can trust to carry down an express."

The vicar saw what was coming. Was it his good angel which prompted him to interpose?

"Why not send a parcel by rail?"

"I can trust the rail as far as D——; but I cannot trust those coaches. If you could do me so great a kindness ——"

"I will. I can start by the one o'clock train, and by ten o'clock to-night I shall be in Whitford."

"Are you certain?"

"If God shall please, I am certain."

"And you will take charge of a letter? Perhaps, too, you could see him yourself; and tell him — you see, I trust you with everything — that my fortune, his own fortune, depends on his being here to-morrow morning. He must start to-night, sir — to-night, tell him, if there were twenty Miss Lavingtons in Whitford — or he is a ruined man!"

The letter was written and put into the vicar's hands, with a hundred entreaties from the terrified banker. A cab was called, and the clergyman rattled off to the railway terminus.

"Well," said he to himself, "God has indeed blessed my errand; giving, as always, 'exceeding abundantly more than we are able to ask or think!' For some weeks, at least, this poor lamb is safe from the destroyer's clutches. I must improve to the utmost those few precious days in strengthening her in her holy purpose. But, after all, he will return, daring and cunning as ever; and then will not the fascination recommence?"

And, as he mused, a little fiend passed by, and whispered, "Unless he comes up to-night, he is a ruined man."

It was Friday, and the vicar had thought it a fit preparation for so important an errand to taste no food that day. Weakness and hunger, joined to the roar and bustle of London, had made him excited, nervous, unable to control his thoughts, or fight against a stupefying headache; and his self-weakened will punished him, by yielding him up an easy prey to his own fancies.

"Ay," he thought, "if he were ruined, after all, it would be well for God's cause. The Lavingtons, at least, would find no temptation in his wealth: and Argemone — she is too proud, too luxurious, to marry a beggar. She might embrace a holy poverty for the sake of her own soul; but for the gratification of an earthly passion, never! Base and carnal delights would never tempt her so far."

Alas, poor pedant! Among all that thy books taught thee, they did not open to thee much of the depths of that human heart which thy dogmas taught thee to despise as diabolic.

Again the little fiend whispered:

"Unless he comes up to-night, he is a ruined man."

"And what if he is?" thought the vicar. "Riches are a curse; and poverty a blessing. Is it not his wealth which is ruining his soul? Idleness and fulness of bread have made him what he is — a luxurious and self-willed dreamer, battening on his own fancies. Were it not rather a boon to him to take from him the root of all evil?"

Most true, vicar. And yet the devil was at that moment transforming himself into an angel of light for thee.

But the vicar was yet honest. If he had thought that by cutting off his right hand he could have saved Lancelot's soul (by canonical methods, of course; for who would wish to save souls in any other?), he would have done it without hesitation.

Again the little fiend whispered:

"Unless he comes up to-night he is a ruined man."

A terrible sensation seized him. — Why should he give the letter to-night?

"You promised," whispered the inner voice.

"No, I did not promise exactly, in so many words; that is, I only said I would be at home to-night, if God pleased. And what if God should not please? — I promised for his good. What if, on second thoughts, it should be better for him not to keep my promise?" A moment afterwards, he tossed the temptation from him indignantly: but back it came. At every gaudy shop, at every smoke-grimed manufactory, at the face of every anxious victim of Mammon, of every sturdy, cheerful artisan, the fiend winked and pointed, crying, "And what if he be ruined? Look at the thousands who have, and are miserable — at the millions who have not, and are no sadder than their own tyrants."

Again and again he thrust the thought from him, but more and more weakly. His whole frame shook; the perspiration stood on his forehead. As he took his railway ticket, his look was so haggard and painful that the clerk asked him whether he were ill. The train was just starting; he threw himself into a carriage — he would have locked himself in if he could; and felt an inexpressible relief when he found himself rushing past houses and market-gardens, whirled onward, whether he would or not, in the right path — homeward.

But was it the right path? for again the temptation flitted past him. He threw himself back, and tried to ask counsel of One above; but there was no answer, nor any that regarded. His heart was silent, and dark as midnight fog. Why

should there have been an answer? He had not listened to the voice within. Did he wish for a miracle to show him his duty?

"Not that I care for detection," he said to himself. "What is shame to me? Is it not a glory to be evil-spoken of in the cause of God? How can the world appreciate the motives of those who are not of the world? — the divine wisdom of the serpent — at once the saint's peculiar weapon, and a part of his peculiar cross, when men call him a deceiver, because they confound, forsooth, his spiritual subtlety with their earthly cunning. Have I not been called 'liar,' 'hypocrite,' 'Jesuit,' often enough already, to harden me towards bearing that name once again?"

That led him into sad thoughts of his last few years' career, — of the friends and pupils whose secession to Rome had been attributed to his hypocrisy, his "disguised Romanism;" and then the remembrance of poor Luke Smith flashed across him for the first time since he left the bank.

"I must see him," he said to himself; "I must argue with him face to face. Who knows but that it may be given even to my unworthiness to snatch him from this accursed slough?"

And then he remembered that his way home lay through the city in which the new convert's parish was — that the coach stopped there to change horses; and again the temptation leapt up again, stronger than ever, under the garb of an imperative call of duty.

He made no determination for or against it. He was too weak in body and mind to resist; and in a half sleep, broken with an aching, terrified

sense of something wanting which he could not find, he was swept down the line, got on the coach, and mechanically, almost without knowing it, found himself set down at the city of A——, and the coach rattling away down the street.

He sprang from his stupor, and called madly after it — ran a few steps —

"You might as well try to catch the clouds, sir," said the ostler. "Gemmen should make up their minds afore they gets down."

Alas! so thought the vicar. But it was too late; and, with a heavy heart, he asked the way to the late curate's house.

Thither he went. Mr. Luke Smith was just at dinner, but the vicar was, nevertheless, shown into the bachelor's little dining-room. But what was his disgust and disappointment at finding his late pupil *tête-à-tête* over a comfortable fish-dinner, opposite a burly, vulgar, cunning-eyed man, with a narrow rim of muslin turned down over his stiff cravat, of whose profession there could be no doubt.

"My dearest sir," said the new convert, springing up with an air of extreme *empressement*, "what an unexpected pleasure! Allow me to introduce you to my excellent friend, Padre Bugiardo!"

The padre rose, bowed obsequiously, "was overwhelmed with delight at being at last introduced to one of whom he had heard so much," sat down again, and poured himself out a bumper of sherry; while the vicar commenced making the best of a bad matter by joining in the now necessary business of eating.

He had not a word to say for himself. Poor

Luke was particularly jovial and flippant, and startlingly unlike his former self. The padre went on staring out of the window, and talking in a loud forced tone about the astonishing miracles of the "Ecstatica" and "Addolorata;" and the poor vicar, finding the purpose for which he had sacrificed his own word of honor utterly frustrated by the priest's presence, sat silent and crestfallen the whole evening.

The priest had no intention of stirring. The late father-confessor tried to outstay his new rival, but in vain; the padre deliberately announced his intention of taking a bed, and the vicar, with a heavy heart, rose to go to his inn.

As he went out at the door, he caught an opportunity of saying one word to the convert.

"My poor Luke! and are you happy? Tell me honestly, in God's sight tell me!"

"Happier than ever I was in my life! No more self-torture, physical or mental, now. These good priests thoroughly understand poor human nature, I can assure you."

The vicar sighed, for the speech was evidently meant as a gentle rebuke to himself. But the young man ran on, half laughing:

"You know how you and the rest used to tell us what a sad thing it was that we were all cursed with consciences, — what a fearful miserable burden moral responsibility was; but that we must submit to it as an inevitable evil. Now that burden is gone, thank God! We of the True Church have some one to keep our consciences for us. The padre settles all about what is right or wrong, and we slip on as easily as ——"

"A hog or a butterfly!" said the vicar, bitterly.

"Exactly," answered Luke. "And, on your own showing, are clean gainers of a happy life here, not to mention heaven hereafter. God bless you! We shall soon see you one of us."

"Never, so help me God!" said the vicar; all the more fiercely because he was almost at that moment of the young man's opinion.

The vicar stepped out into the night. The rain, which had given place during the afternoon to a bright sun and clear chilly evening, had returned with double fury. The wind was sweeping and howling down the lonely streets, and lashed the rain into his face, while gray clouds were rushing past the moon like terrified ghosts across the awful void of the black heaven. Above him gaunt poplars groaned and bent, like giants cowering from the wrath of Heaven, yet rooted by grim necessity to their place of torture. The roar and tumult without him harmonized strangely with the discord within. He staggered and strode along the plashy pavement, muttering to himself at intervals:

"Rest for the soul? peace of mind? I have been promising them all my life to others — have I found them myself? And here is this poor boy saying that he has gained them — in the very barbarian superstition which I have been anathematizing to him! What is true, at this rate? What is false? Is anything right or wrong? except in as far as men feel it to be right or wrong. Else whence does this poor fellow's peace come, or the peace of many a convert more? They have all, one by one, told me the same story. And is not a religion to be known by its

fruits? Are they not right in going where they can get peace of mind?"

Certainly, vicar. If peace of mind be the *summum bonum*, and religion is merely the science of self-satisfaction, they are right; and your wisest plan will be to follow them at once, or failing that, to apply to the next substitute that can be discovered — alcohol and opium.

As he went on, talking wildly to himself, he passed the Union Workhouse. Opposite the gate, under the lee of a wall, some twenty men, women, and children were huddled together on the bare ground. They had been refused lodging in the workhouse, and were going to pass the night in that situation. As he came up to them, coarse jests, and snatches of low drinking-songs, ghastly as the laughter of lost spirits in the pit, mingled with the feeble wailings of some child of shame. The vicar recollected how he had seen the same sight at the door of Kensington Workhouse, walking home one night in company with Luke Smith; and how, too, he had commented to him on that fearful sign of the times, and had somewhat unfairly drawn a contrast between the niggard cruelty of "popular Protestantism," and the fancied "liberality of the middle age." What wonder if his pupil had taken him at his word?

Delighted to escape from his own thoughts by anything like action, he pulled out his purse to give an alms. There was no silver in it, but only some fifteen or twenty sovereigns, which he that day received as payment for some bitter reviews in a leading religious periodical. Everything that night seemed to shame and confound him more. As he touched the money, there

sprang up in his mind in an instant the thought of the articles which had procured it; by one of those terrible, searching inspirations, in which the light which lighteth every man awakes as a lightning-flash of judgment, he saw them, and his own heart, for one moment, as they were; — their blind prejudice; their reckless imputations of motives; their wilful concealment of any palliating clauses; their party nicknames, given without a shudder at the terrible accusations which they conveyed. And then the indignation, the shame, the reciprocal bitterness which those articles would excite, tearing still wider the bleeding wounds of that Church which they professed to defend! And then, in this case, too, the thought rushed across him, "What if I should have been wrong and my adversary right? What if I have made the heart of the righteous sad whom God has not made sad? I! to have been dealing out Heaven's thunders, as if I were infallible! I! who am certain at this moment of no fact in heaven or earth, except my own untruth! God! who am I that I should judge another?" And the coins seemed to him like the price of blood — he fancied that he felt them red-hot to his hand, and, in his eagerness to get rid of the accursed thing, he dealt it away fiercely to the astonished group, amid whining and flattery, wrangling and ribaldry; and then, not daring to wait and see the use to which his money would be put, hurried off to the inn, and tried in uneasy slumbers to forget the time, until the mail passed through at daybreak on its way to Whitford.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VILLAGE REVEL

AT dusk that same evening the two had started for the village fair. A velveteen shooting-jacket, a pair of corduroy trousers, and a waistcoat, furnished by Tregarva, covered with flowers of every imaginable hue, tolerably disguised Lancelot, who was recommended by his conductor to keep his hands in his pockets as much as possible, lest their delicacy, which was, as it happened, not very remarkable, might betray him. As they walked together along the plashy turnpike road, overtaking, now and then, groups of two or three who were out on the same errand as themselves, Lancelot could not help remarking to the keeper how superior was the look of comfort in the boys and young men, with their ruddy cheeks and smart dresses, to the worn and haggard appearance of the elder men.

"Let them alone, poor fellows," said Tregarva; "it won't last long. When they've got two or three children at their heels, they'll look as thin and shabby as their own fathers."

"They must spend a great deal of money on their clothes."

"And on their stomachs, too, sir. They never lay by a farthing; and I don't see how they can, when their club-money's paid, and their insides are well filled."

"Do you mean to say that they actually have not as much to eat after they marry?"

"Indeed and I do, sir. They get no more wages afterwards round here, and have four or five to clothe and feed off the same money that used to keep one; and that sum won't take long to work out, I think."

"But do they not in some places pay the married men higher wages than the unmarried?"

"That's a worse trick still, sir; for it tempts the poor thoughtless boys to go and marry the first girl they can get hold of; and it don't want much persuasion to make them do that at any time."

"But why don't the clergymen teach them to put into the savings banks?"

"One here and there, sir, says what he can, though it's of very little use. Besides, every one is afraid of savings banks now; not a year but one reads of some breaking and the lawyers going off with the earnings of the poor. And if they did n't, youth's a foolish time at best; and the carnal man will be hankering after amusement, sir — amusement."

"And no wonder," said Lancelot; "at all events, I should not think they got much of it. But it does seem strange that no other amusement can be found for them than the beer-shop. Can't they read? Can't they practise light and interesting handicrafts at home, as the German peasantry do?"

"Who 'll teach 'em, sir? From the plough-tail to the reaping-hook, and back again, is all they know. Besides, sir, they are not like us Cornish; they are a stupid pig-headed generation at the

best, these south countrymen. They're grown-up babies who want the parson and the squire to be leading them, and preaching to them, and spurring them on, and coaxing them up, every moment. And as for scholarship, sir, a boy leaves school at nine or ten to follow the horses; and between that time and his wedding-day he forgets every word he ever learnt, and becomes, for the most part, as thorough a heathen savage at heart as those wild Indians in the Brazils used to be."

"And then we call them civilized Englishmen!" said Lancelot. "We can see that your Indian is a savage, because he wears skins and feathers; but your Irish cottar or your English laborer, because he happens to wear a coat and trousers, is to be considered a civilized man."

"It's the way of the world, sir," said Tregarva, "judging carnal judgment, according to the sight of its own eyes; always looking at the outsides of things and men, sir, and never much deeper. But as for reading, sir, it's all very well for me, who have been a keeper and dawdled about like a gentleman with a gun over my arm; but did you ever do a good day's farm-work in your life? If you had, man or boy, you would n't have been game for much reading when you got home; you 'd do just what these poor fellows do, — tumble into bed at eight o'clock, hardly waiting to take your clothes off, knowing that you must turn up again at five o'clock the next morning to get a breakfast of bread, and perhaps a dab of the squire's dripping, and then back to work again; and so on, day after day, sir, week after week, year after year, without a hope or a chance of being anything but what you are, and only too thankful if you can get work

to break your back, and catch the rheumatism over."

"But do you mean to say that their labor is so severe and incessant?"

"It 's only God's blessing if it is incessant, sir, for if it stops, they starve, or go to the house to be worse fed than the thieves in gaol. And as for its being severe, there 's many a boy, as their mothers will tell you, comes home night after night, too tired to eat their suppers, and tumble, fasting, to bed in the same foul shirt which they 've been working in all the day, never changing their rag of calico from week's end to week's end, or washing the skin that 's under it once in seven years."

"No wonder," said Lancelot, "that such a life of drudgery makes them brutal and reckless."

"No wonder, indeed, sir: they 've no time to think; they 're born to be machines, and machines they must be; and I think, sir," he added bitterly, "it 's God's mercy that they dare n't think. It 's God's mercy that they don't feel. Men that write books and talk at elections call this a free country, and say that the poorest and meanest has a free opening to rise and become prime minister, if he can. But you see, sir, the misfortune is, that in practice he can't; for one who gets into a gentleman's family, or into a little shop, and so saves a few pounds, fifty know that they 've no chance before them, but day-laborer born, day-laborer live, from hand to mouth, scraping and pinching to get not meat and beer even, but bread and potatoes; and then, at the end of it all, for a worthy reward, half-a-crown a week of parish pay — or the workhouse. That 's a lively hopeful prospect for a Christian man!"

"But," said Lancelot, "I thought this new poor-law was to stir them up to independence?"

"Oh, sir, the old law has bit too deep: it made them slaves and beggars at heart. It taught them not to be ashamed of parish pay — to demand it as a right."

"And so it is their right," said Lancelot. "In God's name, if a country is so ill-constituted that it cannot find its own citizens in work, it is bound to find them in food."

"Maybe, sir, maybe. God knows I don't grudge it them. It's a poor pittance at best, when they have got it. But don't you see, sir, how all poor-laws, old or new either, suck the independent spirit out of a man; how they make the poor wretch reckless; how they tempt him to spend every extra farthing in amusement?"

"How then?"

"Why, he is always tempted to say to himself, 'Whatever happens to me, the parish must keep me. If I am sick it must doctor me; if I am worn out it must feed me; if I die it must bury me; if I leave my children paupers the parish must look after them, and they'll be as well off with the parish as they were with me. Now they've only got just enough to keep body and soul together, and the parish can't give them less than that. What's the use of cutting myself off from sixpenny-worth of pleasure here, and sixpenny-worth there? I'm not saving money for my children, *I'm only saving the farmers' rates.*' *There* it is, sir," said Tregarva; "that's the bottom of it, sir, — 'I'm only saving the farmers' rates. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!'"

"I don't see my way out of it," said Lancelot.

"So says everybody, sir. But I should have thought those members of parliament, and statesmen, and university scholars have been set up in the high places, out of the wood where we are all struggling and scrambling, just that they might see their way out of it; and if they don't, sir, and that soon, as sure as God is in heaven, these poor fellows will cut their way out of it."

"And blindfolded and ignorant as they are," said Lancelot, "they will be certain to cut their way out just in the wrong direction."

"I'm not so sure of that, sir," said Tregarva, lowering his voice. "What is written? That there is One who hears the desire of the poor. 'Lord, Thou preparest their hearts, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto, to help the fatherless and poor unto their right, that the man of the earth be no more exalted against them.'"

"Why, you are talking like any Chartist, Tregarva!"

"Am I, sir? I have n't heard much Scripture quoted among them myself, poor fellows; but to tell you the truth, sir, I don't know what I am becoming. I'm getting half mad with all I see going on and not going on; and you will agree, sir, that what's happened this day can't have done much to cool my temper or brighten my hopes; though, God's my witness, there's no spite in me for my own sake. But what makes me maddest of all, sir, is to see that everybody sees these evils, except just the men who can cure them — the squires and the clergy."

"Why surely, Tregarva, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of clergymen and landlords work-

ing heart and soul at this moment, to better the condition of the laboring classes!"

"Ay, sir, they see the evils, and yet they don't see them. They do not see what is the matter with the poor man; and the proof of it is, sir, that the poor have no confidence in them. They'll take their alms, but they'll hardly take their schooling, and their advice they won't take at all. And why is it, sir? Because the poor have got in their heads in these days a strange confused fancy, maybe, but still a deep and a fierce one, that they have n't got what they call their rights. If you were to raise the wages of every man in this country from nine to twelve shillings a week to-morrow, you would n't satisfy them; at least, the only ones whom you would satisfy would be the mere hogs among them, who, as long as they can get a full stomach, care for nothing else."

"What, in Heaven's name, do they want?" asked Lancelot.

"They hardly know yet, sir; but they know well what they don't want. The question with them, sir, believe me, is not so much, How shall we get better fed and better housed, but whom shall we depend upon for our food and for our house? Why should we depend on the will and fancy of any man for our rights? They are asking ugly questions among themselves, sir, about what those two words, rent and taxes, mean, and about what that same strange word, freedom, means. Right or wrong, they've got the thought into their heads, and it's growing there, and they will find an answer for it. Depend upon it, sir, I tell you a truth, and they expect a change. You will hear them talk of it to-night, sir, if you've luck."

"We all expect a change, for that matter," said Lancelot. "That feeling is common to all classes and parties just now."

Tregarva took off his hat.

"'For the word of the Lord hath spoken it.' Do you know, sir, I long at times that I did agree with those Chartists? If I did I'd turn lecturer to-morrow. How a man could speak out then! If he saw any door of hope, any way of salvation for these poor fellows, even if it was nothing better than salvation by act of parliament!"

"But why don't you trust the truly worthy among the clergy and the gentry to leaven their own ranks and bring all right in time?"

"Because, sir, they seem to be going the way only to make things worse. The people have been so dependent on them heretofore, that they have become thorough beggars. You can have no knowledge, sir, of the whining, canting, deceit, and lies which those poor miserable laborers' wives palm on charitable ladies. If they were n't angels, some of them, they 'd lock up their purses and never give away another farthing. And, sir, these free-schools, and these penny-clubs, and clothing clubs, and these heaps of money which are given away, all make the matter worse and worse. They make the laborer fancy that he is not to depend upon God and his own right hand, but on what his wife can worm out of the good nature of the rich. Why, sir, they growl as insolently now at the parson or the squire's wife if they don't get as much money as their neighbors, as they used to at the parish vestrymen under the old law. Look at that Lord Vieuxbois, sir, as sweet a gentleman as ever God

made. It used to do me good to walk behind him when he came over here shooting, just to hear the gentle kind-hearted way in which he used to speak to every old soul he met. He spends his whole life and time about the poor, I hear. But, sir, as sure as you live he 's making his people slaves and humbugs. He does n't see, sir, that they want to be raised bodily out of this miserable hand-to-mouth state, to be brought nearer up to him, and set on a footing where they can shift for themselves. Without meaning it, sir, all his boundless charities are keeping the people down, and telling them they must stay down, and not help themselves, but wait for what he gives them. He fats prize-laborers, sir, just as Lord Minchampstead fats prize-oxen and pigs."

Lancelot could not help thinking of that amusingly inconsistent, however well-meant, scene in "Coningsby," in which Mr. Lyle is represented as trying to restore "the independent order of peasantry," by making them the receivers of public alms at his own gate, as if they had been middle-aged serfs or vagabonds, and not citizens of modern England.

"It may suit the Mr. Lyles of this age," thought Lancelot, "to make the people constantly and visibly comprehend that property is their protector and their friend, but I question whether it will suit the people themselves, unless they can make property understand that it owes them something more definite than protection."

Saddened by this conversation, which had helped to give another shake to the easy-going complacency with which Lancelot had been used to contemplate the world below him, and look on its evils

as necessaries, ancient and fixed as the universe, he entered the village fair, and was a little disappointed at his first glimpse of the village-green. Certainly his expectations had not been very exalted; but there had run through them a hope of something melodramatic, dreams of May-pole dancing and athletic games, somewhat of village-belle rivalry, of the Corin and Sylvia school; or, failing that, a few Touchstones and Audreys, some genial earnest buffo humor here and there. But there did not seem much likelihood of it. Two or three apple and gingerbread stalls, from which draggled children were turning slowly and wistfully away to go home; a booth full of trumpery fairings, in front of which tawdry girls were coaxing maudlin youths, with faded southernwood in their button-holes; another long low booth, from every crevice of which reeked odors of stale beer and smoke, by courtesy denominated tobacco, to the treble accompaniment of a jigging fiddle and a tambourine, and the bass one of grumbled oaths and curses within — these were the means of relaxation which the piety, freedom, and civilization of fourteen centuries, from Hengist to Queen Victoria, had devised and made possible for the English peasant!

"There seems very little here to see," said Lancelot, half peevishly.

"I think, sir," quoth Tregarva, "that very thing is what's most worth seeing."

Lancelot could not help, even at the risk of detection, investing capital enough in sugar-plums and gingerbread, to furnish the urchins around with the material for a whole carnival of stomach-aches; and he felt a great inclination to clear the

fairing-stall in a like manner, on behalf of the poor bedizened sickly-looking girls round, but he was afraid of the jealousy of some beer-bemuddled swain. The ill-looks of the young girls surprised him much. Here and there smiled a plump rosy face enough; but the majority seemed under-sized, under-fed, utterly wanting in grace, vigor, and what the penny-a-liners call "rude health." He remarked it to Tregarva. The keeper smiled mournfully.

"You see those little creatures dragging home babies in arms nearly as big as themselves, sir. That and bad food, want of milk especially, accounts for their growing up no bigger than they do; and as for their sad countenances, sir, most of them must carry a lighter conscience before they carry a brighter face."

"What do you mean?" asked Lancelot.

"The clergyman who enters the weddings and the baptisms knows well enough what I mean, sir. But we 'll go into that booth, if you want to see the thick of it, sir; that 's to say, if you 're not ashamed."

"I hope we need neither of us do anything to be ashamed of there; and as for seeing, I begin to agree with you, that what makes the whole thing most curious is its intense dulness."

"What upon earth is that?"

"I say, look out there!"

"Well, you look out yourself!"

This was caused by a violent blow across the shins with a thick stick, the deed of certain drunken wiseacres who were persisting in playing in the dark the never very lucrative game of three sticks a penny, conducted by a couple of

gipsies. Poor fellows! there was one excuse for them. It was the only thing there to play at, except a set of skittles; and on those they had lost their money every Saturday night for the last seven years each at his own village beer-shop.

So into the booth they turned; and as soon as Lancelot's eyes were accustomed to the reeking atmosphere, he saw seated at two long temporary tables of board, fifty or sixty of "My brethren," as clergymen call them in their sermons, wrangling, stupid, beery, with sodden eyes and drooping lips — interspersed with more girls and brazen-faced women, with dirty flowers in their caps, whose whole business seemed to be to cast jealous looks at each other, and defend themselves from the coarse overtures of their swains.

Lancelot had been already perfectly astonished at the foulness of language which prevailed; and the utter absence of anything like chivalrous respect, almost of common decency, towards women. But lo! the language of the elder women was quite as disgusting as that of the men, if not worse. He whispered a remark on the point to Tregarva, who shook his head.

"It's the field-work, sir — the field-work, that does it all. They get accustomed there from their childhood to hear words whose very meanings they should n't know; and the elder teach the younger ones, and the married ones are worst of all. It wears them out in body, sir, that field-work, and makes them brutes in soul and in manners."

"Why don't they give it up? Why don't the respectable ones set their faces against it?"

"They can't afford it, sir. They must go a-field, or go hungered, most of them. And they get to like the gossip and scandal, and coarse fun of it, while their children are left at home to play in the roads, or fall into the fire, as plenty do every year."

"Why not at school?"

"The big ones are kept at home, sir, to play at nursing those little ones who are too young to go. Oh, sir," he added, in a tone of deep feeling, "it is very little of a father's care, or a mother's love, that a laborer's child knows in these days!"

Lancelot looked round the booth with a hopeless feeling. There was awkward dancing going on at the upper end. He was too much sickened to go and look at it. He began examining the faces and foreheads of the company, and was astonished at the first glance by the lofty and ample development of brain in at least one half. There were intellects there — or rather capacities of intellect, capable, surely, of anything, had not the promise of the brow been almost always belied by the loose and sensual lower features. They were evidently rather a degraded than an undeveloped race. "The low forehead of the Kabyle and Koord," thought Lancelot, "is compensated by the grim sharp lip, and glittering eye, which prove that all the small capabilities of the man have been called out into clear and vigorous action: but here the very features themselves, both by what they have and what they want, testify against that society which carelessly wastes her most precious wealth, the manhood of her masses! Tregarva! you have observed a good many things — did you ever observe whether

the men with the large foreheads were better than the men with the small ones?"

"Ay, sir, I know what you are driving at. I 've heard of that new-fangled notion of scholars, which, if you 'll forgive my plain speaking, expects man's brains to do the work of God's grace."

"But what have you remarked?"

"All I ever saw was, that the stupid-looking ones were the greatest blackguards, and the clever-looking ones the greatest rogues."

Lancelot was rebuked, but not surprised. He had been for some time past suspecting, from the bitter experience of his own heart, the favorite modern theory which revives the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria, by making intellect synonymous with virtue, and then jumbling, like poor bewildered Proclus, the "physical understanding" of the brain with the pure "intellect" of the spirit.

"You 'll see something, if you look round, sir, a great deal easier to explain — and, I should have thought, a great deal easier to cure — than want of wits."

"And what is that?"

"How different-looking the young ones are from their fathers, and still more from their grandfathers! Look at those three or four old grammers talking together there. For all their being shrunk with age and weather, you won't see such fine-grown men anywhere else in this booth."

It was too true. Lancelot recollected now having remarked it before when at church; and having wondered why almost all the youths were

so much smaller, clumsier, lower-brained, and weaker-jawed than their elders.

"Why is it, Tregarva?"

"Worse food, worse lodging, worse nursing — and, I 'm sore afraid, worse blood. There was too much filthiness and drunkenness went on in the old war-times, not to leave a taint behind it, for many a generation. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them!"

"Oh!" thought Lancelot, "for some young sturdy Lancashire or Lothian blood, to put new life into the old frozen South Saxon veins! Even a drop of the warm enthusiastic Celtic would be better than none. Perhaps this Irish immigration may do some good, after all."

Perhaps it may, Lancelot. Let us hope so, since it is pretty nearly inevitable.

Sadder and sadder, Lancelot tried to listen to the conversation of the men round him. To his astonishment he hardly understood a word of it. It was half articulate, nasal, guttural, made up almost entirely of vowels, like the speech of savages. He had never before been struck with the significant contrast between the sharp, clearly defined articulation, the vivid and varied tones of the gentleman, or even of the London street-boy when compared with the coarse, half-formed growls, as of a company of seals, which he heard round him. That single fact struck him, perhaps, more deeply than any; it connected itself with many of his physiological fancies; it was the parent of many thoughts and plans of his after-life. Here and there he could distinguish a half sentence. An old shrunken man opposite him was drawing figures in the spilt beer with

his pipe-stem, and discoursing of the glorious times before the great war, "when there was more food than there were mouths, and more work than there were hands." "Poor human nature!" thought Lancelot, as he tried to follow one of those unintelligible discussions about the relative prices of the loaf and the bushel of flour, which ended, as usual, in more swearing, and more quarrelling, and more beer to make it up — "Poor human nature! always looking back, as the German sage says, to some fancied golden age, never looking forward to the real one which is coming!"

"But I say, vather," drawled out some one, "they say there 's a sight more money in England now than there was afore the war-time."

"Eees, booy," said the old man; "but *it 's got into too few hands.*"

"Well," thought Lancelot, "there 's a glimpse of practical sense, at least." And a pedler who sat next him, a bold, black-whiskered bully from the potteries, hazarded a joke:

"It 's all along of this new sky-and-tough-it farming. They used to spread the money broadcast, but now they drills it all in one place, like bone-dust under their fancy plants, and we poor self-sown chaps gets none."

This garland of fancies was received with great applause; whereat the pedler, emboldened, proceeded to observe, mysteriously, that "donkeys took a beating, but horses kicked at it; and that they 'd found out that in Staffordshire long ago. You want a good Chartist lecturer down here, my covies, to show you donkeys of laboring men that you have got iron on your heels, if you only know'd how to use it."

"And what 's the use of rioting?" asked some one, querulously.

"Why, if you don't riot, the farmers will starve you."

"And if we do, they 'd turn sodgers — yeomanry, as they call it, though there ain't a yeoman among them in these parts; and then they takes sword and kills us. So, riot or none, they has it all their own way."

Lancelot heard many more scraps of this sort. He was very much struck with their dread of violence. It did not seem cowardice. It was not loyalty — the English laborer has fallen below the capability of so spiritual a feeling; Lancelot had found out that already. It could not be apathy, for he heard nothing but complaint upon complaint bandied from mouth to mouth the whole evening. They seemed rather sunk too low in body and mind, — too stupefied and spiritless, to follow the example of the manufacturing districts; above all, they were too ill-informed. It is not mere starvation which goads the Leicester weaver to madness. It is starvation with education, — an empty stomach and a cultivated, even though miscultivated, mind.

At that instant, a huge hulking farm-boy rolled into the booth, roaring dolefully the end of a song, with a punctuation of his own invention:

"He 'll maak me a lady . Zo . Vine to be zyure.
And, vaithfully; love me. Although; I; be-e; poor-r-r-r."

Lancelot would have laughed heartily at him anywhere else; but the whole scene was past a jest; and a gleam of pathos and tenderness seemed to shine even from that doggerel, — a

vista, as it were, of true genial nature, in the far distance. But as he looked round again, "What hope," he thought, "of its realization? Arcadian dreams of pastoral innocence and graceful industry, I suppose, are to be henceforth monopolized by the stage or the boudoir? Never, so help me, God!"

The ursine howls of the new-comer seemed to have awakened the spirit of music in the party.

"Coom, Blackburd, gi' us zong, Blackburd, bo'!" cried a dozen voices to an impish, dark-eyed gipsy boy, of some thirteen years old.

"Put 'n on taable. Now, then, pipe up!"

"What will 'ee ha'?"

"Mary; gi' us Mary."

"I shall make a' girls cry," quoth Blackbird, with a grin.

"Do'n good, too; they likes it: zing away."

And the boy began, in a broad country twang, which could not overpower the sad melody of the air, or the rich sweetness of his flute-like voice:

"Young Mary walked sadly down through the green clover,
And sighed as she looked at the babe at her breast;
'My roses are faded, my false love a rover,
The green graves they call me, "Come home to your rest."'

"Then by rode a soldier in gorgeous arraying,
And 'Where is your bride-ring, my fair maid?' he cried;
'I ne'er had a bride-ring, by false man's betraying,
Nor token of love but this babe at my side.

"'Tho' gold could not buy me, sweet words could deceive me;
So faithful and lonely till death I must roam.'
'Oh, Mary, sweet Mary, look up and forgive me,
With wealth and with glory your true love comes home;

"'So give me my own babe, those soft arms adorning,
I 'll wed you and cherish you, never to stray;
For it 's many a dark and a wild cloudy morning
Turns out by the noon-time a sunshiny day.'"

"A bad moral that, sir," whispered Tregarva.

"Better than none," answered Lancelot.

"It 's well if you are right, sir, for you 'll hear no other."

The keeper spoke truly; in a dozen different songs, more or less coarsely, but, in general, with a dash of pathetic sentiment, the same case of lawless love was embodied. It seemed to be their only notion of the romantic. Now and then there was a poaching song; then one of the lowest flash London school — filth and all — was roared in chorus in presence of the women.

"I am afraid that you do not thank me for having brought you to any place so unfit for a gentleman," said Tregarva, seeing Lancelot's sad face.

"Because it is so unfit for a gentleman, therefore I do thank you. It is right to know what one's own flesh and blood are doing."

"Hark to that song, sir! that 's an old one. I did n't think they 'd get on to singing that."

The Blackbird was again on the table, but seemed this time disinclined to exhibit.

"Out wi' un, boy; it wain't burn thy mouth!"

"I be afeard."

"O' who?"

"Keeper there."

He pointed to Tregarva; there was a fierce growl round the room.

"I am no keeper," shouted Tregarva, starting up. "I was turned off this morning for speaking

my mind about the squires, and now I 'm one of you, to live and die."

This answer was received with a murmur of applause; and a fellow in a scarlet merino neckerchief, three waistcoats, and a fancy shooting-jacket, who had been eyeing Lancelot for some time, sidled up behind them, and whispered in Tregarva's ear:

"Perhaps you 'd like an engagement in our line, young man, and your friend there, he seems a sporting gent too. — We could show him very pretty shooting."

Tregarva answered by the first and last oath Lancelot ever heard from him, and turning to him, as the rascal sneaked off:

"That 's a poaching crimp from London, sir; tempting these poor boys to sin, and deceit, and drunkenness, and theft, and the hulks."

"I fancy I saw him somewhere the night of our row — you understand?"

"So do I, sir, but there 's no use talking of it."

Blackbird was by this time prevailed on to sing, and burst out as melodious as ever, while all heads were cocked on one side in delighted attention.

"I zeed a vire o' Monday night,
A vire both great and high;
But I wool not tell you where, my boys,
Nor wool not tell you why.
The varmer he comes screeching out,
To zave 'uns new brood mare;
Zays I, 'You and your stock may roast,
Vor aught us poor chaps care.'

"Coorus, boys, coorus!"

And the chorus burst out:

"Then here 's a curse on varmers all
As rob and grind the poor;
To re'p the fruit of all their works
In * * * * for evermoor-r-r-r.

"A blind owld dame come to the vire,
Zo near as she could get;
Zays, 'Here 's a luck I war n't asleep
To lose this blessed hett.

"'They robs us of our turfing rights,
Our bits of chips and sticks,
Till poor folks now can't warm their hands,
Except by varmer's ricks."

"Then, etc."

And again the boy's delicate voice rung out the ferocious chorus, with something, Lancelot fancied, of fiendish exultation, and every worn face lighted up with a coarse laugh, that indicated no malice — but also no mercy.

Lancelot was sickened, and rose to go.

As he turned, his arm was seized suddenly and firmly. He looked round, and saw a coarse, handsome, showily dressed girl, looking intently into his face. He shook her angrily off.

"You need n't be so proud, Mr. Smith; I've had my hand on the arm of as good as you. Ah, you need n't start! I know you — I know you, I say, well enough. You used to be with him. Where is he?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"He!" answered the girl, with a fierce, surprised look, as if there could be no one else in the world.

"Colonel Bracebridge," whispered Tregarva.

"Ay, he it is! And now walk further off, bloodhound! and let me speak to Mr. Smith.

He is in Norway," she ran on eagerly. "When will he be back? When?"

"Why do you want to know?" asked Lancelot.

"When will he be back?" — she kept on fiercely repeating the question; and then burst out: "Curse you gentlemen all! Cowards! you are all in a league against us poor girls! You can hunt alone when you betray us, and lie fast enough then? But when we come for justice, you all herd together like a flock of rooks; and turn so delicate and honorable all of a sudden — to each other! When will he be back, I say?"

"In a month," answered Lancelot, who saw that something really important lay behind the girl's wildness.

"Too late!" she cried wildly, clapping her hands together; "too late! Here — tell him you saw me; tell him you saw Mary; tell him where and in what a pretty place, too, for maid, master, or man! What are you doing here?"

"What is that to you, my good girl?"

"True. Tell him you saw me here; and tell him, when next he hears of me, it will be in a very different place."

She turned and vanished among the crowd. Lancelot almost ran out into the night, — into a triad of fights, two drunken men, two jealous wives, and a brute who struck a poor, thin, worn-out woman, for trying to coax him home. Lancelot rushed up to interfere, but a man seized his uplifted arm.

"He'll only beat her all the more when he getteth home."

"She has stood that every Saturday night for

the last seven years, to my knowledge," said Tregarva; "and worse, too, at times."

"Good God! is there no escape for her from her tyrant?"

"No, sir. It 's only you gentlefolks who can afford such luxuries; your poor man may be tied to a harlot, or your poor woman to a ruffian, but once done, done forever."

"Well," thought Lancelot, "we English have a characteristic way of proving the holiness of the marriage tie. The angel of Justice and Pity cannot sever it, only the stronger demon of Money."

Their way home lay over Ashy Down, a lofty chalk promontory, round whose foot the river made a sudden bend. As they paced along over the dreary hedgeless stubbles, they both started, as a ghostly "Ha! ha! ha!" rang through the air over their heads, and was answered by a like cry, faint and distant, across the wolds.

"That 's those stone-curlews — at least, so I hope," said Tregarva. "He 'll be round again in a minute."

And again, right between them and the clear, cold moon, "Ha! ha! ha!" resounded over their heads. They gazed up into the cloudless star-bespangled sky, but there was no sign of living thing.

"It 's an old sign to me," quoth Tregarva; "God grant that I may remember it in this black day of mine."

"How so?" asked Lancelot; "I should not have fancied you a superstitious man."

"Names go for nothing, sir, and what my forefathers believed in I am not going to be conceited

enough to disbelieve in a hurry. But if you heard my story you would think I had reason enough to remember that devil's laugh up there."

"Let me hear it then."

"Well, sir, it may be a long story to you, but it was a short one to me, for it was the making of me, out of hand, there and then, blessed be God! But if you will have it ——"

"And I will have it, friend Tregarva," quoth Lancelot, lighting his cigar.

"I was about sixteen years old, just after I came home from the Brazils ——"

"What! have you been in the Brazils?"

"Indeed and I have, sir, for three years; and one thing I learnt there, at least, that's worth going for."

"What's that?"

"What the Garden of Eden must have been like. But those Brazils, under God, were the cause of my being here; for my father, who was a mine-captain, lost all his money there, by no man's fault but his own, and not his either, the world would say, and when we came back to Cornwall he could not stand the bal work, nor I neither. Out of that burning sun, sir, to come home here, and work in the levels, up to our knees in warm water, with the thermometer at 85°, and then up a thousand feet of ladder to grass, reeking wet with heat, and find the easterly sleet driving across those open furze-crofts — he could n't stand it, sir — few stand it long, even of those who stay in Cornwall. We miners have a short lease of life; consumption and strains break us down before we're fifty."

"But how came you here?"

"The doctor told my father, and me too, sir, that we must give up mining, or die of decline: so he came up here, to a sister of his that was married to the squire's gardener, and here he died; and the squire, God bless him and forgive him, took a fancy to me, and made me under-keeper. And I loved the life, for it took me among the woods and the rivers, where I could think of the Brazils, and fancy myself back again. But must n't talk of that — where God wills is all right. And it is a fine life for reading and thinking, a gamekeeper's, for it 's an idle life at best. Now that 's over," he added, with a sigh, "and the Lord has fulfilled His words to me, that He spoke the first night that ever I heard a stone-plover cry."

"What on earth can you mean?" asked Lancelot, deeply interested.

"Why, sir, it was a wild, whirling gray night, with the air full of sleet and rain, and my father sent me over to Redruth town to bring home some trade or other. And as I came back I got blinded with the sleet, and I lost my way across the moors. You know those Cornish furze-moors, sir?"

"No."

"Well, then, they are burrowed like a rabbit-warren with old mine-shafts. You can't go in some places ten yards without finding great, ghastly black holes, covered in with furze, and weeds, and bits of rotting timber; and when I was a boy I could n't keep from them. Something seemed to draw me to go and peep down, and drop pebbles in, to hear them rattle against the sides, fathoms below, till they plumped into

the ugly black still water at the bottom. And I used to be always after them in my dreams, when I was young, falling down them, down, down, all night long, till I woke screaming; for I fancied they were hell's mouth, every one of them. And it stands to reason, sir; we miners hold that the lake of fire can't be far below. For we find it grow warmer, and warmer, and warmer, the farther we sink a shaft; and the learned gentlemen have proved, sir, that it's not the blasting powder, nor the men's breaths, that heat the mine."

Lancelot could but listen.

"Well, sir, I got into a great furze-croft, full of deads (those are the earth-heaps they throw out of the shafts), where no man in his senses dare go forward or back in the dark, for fear of the shafts; and the wind and the snow were so sharp, they made me quite stupid and sleepy; and I knew if I stayed there I should be frozen to death, and if I went on, there were the shafts ready to swallow me up: and what with fear and the howling and raging of the wind, I was like a mazed boy, sir. And I knelt down and tried to pray; and then, in one moment, all the evil things I'd ever done, and the bad words and thoughts that ever crossed me, rose up together as clear as one page of a print-book; and I knew that if I died that minute I should go to hell. And then I saw through the ground all the water in the shafts glaring like blood, and all the sides of the shafts fierce red-hot, as if hell was coming up. And I heard the knockers knocking, or thought I heard them, as plain as I hear that grasshopper in the hedge now."

"What are the knockers?"

"They are the ghosts, the miners hold, of the old Jews, sir, that crucified our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman emperors to work the mines; and we find their old smelting-houses, which we call Jews' houses, and their blocks of tin, at the bottom of the great bogs, which we call Jews' tin; and there's a town among us, too, which we call Market-Jew — but the old name was Marazion; that means the Bitterness of Zion, they tell me. Isn't it so, sir?"

"I believe it is," said Lancelot, utterly puzzled in this new field of romance.

"And bitter work it was for them, no doubt, poor souls! We used to break into the old shafts and adits which they had made, and find old stags'-horn pickaxes, that crumbled to pieces when we brought them to grass; and they say, that if a man will listen, sir, of a still night, about those old shafts, he may hear the ghosts of them at working, knocking, and picking, as clear as if there was a man at work in the next level. It may be all an old fancy. I suppose it is. But I believed it when I was a boy; and it helped the work in me that night. But I'll go on with my story."

"Go on with what you like," said Lancelot.

"Well, sir, I was down on my knees among the furze-bushes, and I tried to pray; but I was too frightened, for I felt the beast I had been, sir; and I expected the ground to open and let me down every moment; and then there came by over my head a rushing, and a cry. 'Ha! ha! ha! Paul!' it said; and it seemed as if all the

devils and witches were out on the wind, a-laughing at my misery. 'Oh, I 'll mend — I 'll repent,' I said, 'indeed I will:' and again it came back, — 'Ha! ha! ha! Paul!' it said. I knew afterwards that it was a bird; but the Lord sent it to me for a messenger, no less, that night. And I shook like a reed in the water; and then, all at once a thought struck me. 'Why should I be a coward? Why should I be afraid of shafts, or devils, or hell, or anything else? If I am a miserable sinner, there 's One died for me — I owe him love, not fear at all. I 'll not be frightened into doing right — that 's a rascally reason for repentance.' And so it was, sir, that I rose up like a man, and said to the Lord Jesus, right out into the black, dumb air, — 'If you 'll be on my side this night, good Lord, that died for me, I 'll be on your side forever, villain as I am, if I 'm worth making any use of.' And there and then, sir, I saw a light come over the bushes, brighter, and brighter, up to me; and there rose up a voice within me, and spoke to me, quite soft and sweet, — 'Fear not, Paul, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.' And what more happened I can't tell, for when I woke I was safe at home. My father and his folk had been out with lanterns after me; and there they found me, sure enough, in a dead faint on the ground. But this I know, sir, that those words have never left my mind since for a day together; and I know that they will be fulfilled in me this tide, or never."

Lancelot was silent a few minutes.

"I suppose, Tregarva, that you would call this your conversion?"

"I should call it one, sir, because it was one."

"Tell me now, honestly, did any real, practical change in your behavior take place after that night?"

"As much, sir, as if you put a soul into a hog, and told him that he was a gentleman's son; and, if every time he remembered that, he got spirit enough to conquer his hoggishness, and behave like a man, till the hoggishness died out of him, and the manliness grew up and bore fruit in him, more and more each day."

Lancelot half understood him, and sighed.

A long silence followed, as they paced on past lonely farmyards, from which the rich manure-water was draining across the road in foul black streams, festering and steaming in the chill night air. Lancelot sighed as he saw the fruitful materials of food running to waste, and thought of the "over-population" cry; and then he looked across to the miles of brown moorland on the opposite side of the valley, that lay idle and dreary under the autumn moon, except where here and there a squatter's cottage and rood of fruitful garden gave the lie to the laziness and ignorance of man, who pretends that it is not worth his while to cultivate the soil which God has given him. "Good heavens!" he thought, "had our forefathers had no more enterprise than modern landlords, where should we all have been at this moment? Everywhere waste! Waste of manure, waste of land, waste of muscle, waste of brain, waste of population — and we call ourselves the workshop of the world!"

As they passed through the miserable hamlet-street of Ashy, they saw a light burning in a

window. At the door below, a haggard woman was looking anxiously down the village.

"What 's the matter, Mistress Cooper?" asked Tregarva.

"Here 's Mrs. Grane's poor girl lying sick of the fever — the Lord help her! and the boy died of it last week. We sent for the doctor this afternoon, and he 's busy with a poor soul that 's in her trouble; and now we 've sent down to the squire's, and the young ladies, God bless them! sent answer they 'd come themselves straight way."

"No wonder you have typhus here," said Lancelot, "with this filthy open drain running right before the door. Why can't you clean it out?"

"Why, what harm does that do?" answered the woman, peevishly. "Besides, here 's my master gets up to his work by five in the morning, and not back till seven at night, and by then he ain't in no humor to clean out gutters. And where 's the water to come from to keep a place clean? It costs many a one of us here a shilling a week the summer through to pay fetching water up the hill. We 've work enough to fill our kettles. The muck must just lie in the road, smell or none, till the rain carries it away."

Lancelot sighed again.

"It would be a good thing for Ashy, Tregarva, if the weir-pool did, some fine morning, run up to Ashy Down, as poor Harry Verney said on his deathbed."

"There won't be much of Ashy left by that time, sir, if the landlords go on pulling down cottages at their present rate; driving the people into the towns, to herd together there like hogs,

and walk out to their work four or five miles every morning."

"Why," said Lancelot, "wherever one goes one sees commodious new cottages springing up."

"Wherever you go, sir; but what of wherever you don't go? Along the roadsides, and round the gentlemen's parks, where the cottages are in sight, it's all very smart; but just go into the outlying hamlets — a whited sepulchre, sir, is many a great estate; outwardly swept and garnished, and inwardly full of all uncleanliness, and dead men's bones."

At this moment two cloaked and veiled figures came up to the door, followed by a servant. There was no mistaking those delicate footsteps, and the two young men drew back with fluttering hearts, and breathed out silent blessings on the ministering angels, as they entered the crazy and reeking house.

"I'm thinking, sir," said Tregarva, as they walked slowly and reluctantly away, "that it is hard of the gentlemen to leave all God's work to the ladies, as nine-tenths of them do."

"And I am thinking, Tregarva, that both for ladies and gentlemen, prevention is better than cure."

"There's a great change come over Miss Argemone, sir. She used not to be so ready to start out at midnight to visit dying folk. A blessed change!"

Lancelot thought so too, and he thought that he knew the cause of it.

Argemone's appearance, and their late conversation, had started a new covey of strange fancies.

Lancelot followed them over hill and dale, glad to escape a moment from the mournful lessons of that evening; but even over them there was a cloud of sadness. Harry Verney's last words, and Argemone's accidental whisper about "a curse upon the Lavingtons," rose to his mind. He longed to ask Tregarva, but he was afraid — not of the man, for there was a delicacy in his truthfulness which encouraged the most utter confidence, but of the subject itself; but curiosity conquered.

"What did Old Harry mean about the Nunpool?" he said at last. "Every one seemed to understand him."

"Ah, sir, he ought n't to have talked of it! But dying men, at times, see over the dark water into deep things — deeper than they think themselves. Perhaps there 's one speaks through them. But I thought every one knew the story."

"I do not, at least."

"Perhaps it 's so much the better, sir."

"Why? I must insist on knowing. It is necessary — proper, that is — that I should hear everything that concerns ——"

"I understand, sir; so it is; and I 'll tell you. The story goes, that in the old Popish times, when the nuns held Whitford Priors, the first Mr. Lavington that ever was came from the king with a warrant to turn them all out, poor souls, and take the lands for his own. And they say the head lady of them — prioress, or abbess, as they called her — withstood him, and cursed him, in the name of the Lord, for a hypocrite who robbed harmless women under the cloak of punishing them for sins they 'd never committed (for

they say, sir, he went up to court, and slandered the nuns there for drunkards and worse). And she told him, 'That the curse of the nuns of Whitford should be on him and his, till they helped the poor in the spirit of the nuns of Whitford, and the Nun-pool ran up to Ashy Down.'"

"That time is not come yet," said Lancelot.

"But the worst is to come, sir. For he or his, sir, that night, said or did something to the lady, that was more than woman's heart could bear: and the next morning she was found dead and cold, drowned in that weir-pool. And there the gentleman's eldest son was drowned, and more than one Lavington beside. Miss Argemone's only brother, that was the heir, was drowned there too, when he was a little one."

"I never heard that she had a brother."

"No, sir, no one talks of it. There are many things happen in the great house that you must go to the little house to hear of. But the country-folk believe, sir, that the nun's curse holds true; and they say, that Whitford folks have been getting poorer and wickeder ever since that time, and will, till the Nun-pool runs up to Ashy, and the Lavingtons' name goes out of Whitford Priors."

Lancelot said nothing. A presentiment of evil hung over him. He was utterly down-hearted about Tregarva, about Argemone, about the poor. The truth was, he could not shake off the impression of the scene he had left, utterly disappointed and disgusted with the "revel." He had expected, as I said before, at least to hear something of pastoral sentiment, and of genial

frolicsome humor; to see some innocent, simple enjoyment: but instead, what had he seen but vanity, jealousy, hoggish sensuality, dull vacuity? drudges struggling for one night to forget their drudgery. And yet withal, those songs, and the effect which they produced, showed that in these poor creatures, too, lay the germs of pathos, taste, melody, soft and noble affections. "What right have we," thought he, "to hinder their development? Art, poetry, music, science, — ay, even those athletic and graceful exercises on which we all pride ourselves, which we consider necessary to soften and refine ourselves, what God has given us a monopoly of them? — what is good for the rich man is good for the poor. Over-education? And what of that? What if the poor be raised above 'their station'? What right have we to keep them down? How long have they been our born thralls in soul, as well as in body? What right have we to say that they shall know no higher recreation than the hogs, because, forsooth, if we raised them, they might refuse to work — *for us?* Are *we* to fix how far their minds may be developed? Has not God fixed it for us, when He gave them the same passions, talents, tastes, as our own?"

Tregarva's meditations must have been running in a very different channel, for he suddenly burst out, after a long silence:

"It's a pity these fairs can't be put down. They do a lot of harm; ruin all the young girls round, the Dissenters' children especially, for they run utterly wild; their parents have no hold on them at all."

"They tell them that they are children of the

devil," said Lancelot. "What wonder if the children take them at their word, and act accordingly?"

"The parson here, sir, who is a God-fearing man enough, tried hard to put down this one, but the innkeepers were too strong for him."

"To take away their only amusement, in short. He had much better have set to work to amuse them himself."

"His business is to save souls, sir, and not to amuse them. I don't see, sir, what Christian people want with such vanities."

Lancelot did not argue the point, for he knew the prejudices of Dissenters on the subject; but it did strike him that if Tregarva's brain had been a little less preponderant, he, too, might have found the need of some recreation besides books and thought.

By this time they were at Lancelot's door. He bid the keeper a hearty good-night, made him promise to see him next day, and went to bed and slept till nearly noon.

When he walked into his breakfast-room, he found a note on the table in his uncle's handwriting. The vicar's servant had left it an hour before. He opened it listlessly, rang the bell furiously, ordered out his best horse, and, huddling on his clothes, galloped to the nearest station, caught the train, and arrived at his uncle's bank—it had stopped payment two hours before.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

YES! the bank had stopped. The ancient firm of Smith, Brown, Jones, Robinson, and Co., which had been for some years past expanding from a solid golden organism into a cobweb-tissue and huge balloon of threadbare paper, had at last worn through and collapsed, dropping its car and human contents miserably into the Thames mud. Why detail the pitiable *post-mortem* examination resulting? Lancelot sickened over it for many a long day; not, indeed, mourning at his private losses, but at the thorough hollowness of the system which it exposed, about which he spoke his mind pretty freely to his uncle, who bore it good-humoredly enough. Indeed, the discussions to which it gave rise rather comforted the good man, by turning his thought from his own losses to general principles. "I have ruined you, my poor boy," he used to say; "so you may as well take your money's worth out of me in bullying." Nothing, indeed, could surpass his honest and manly sorrow for having been the cause of Lancelot's beggary; but as for persuading him that his system was wrong, it was quite impossible. Not that Lancelot was hard upon him; on the contrary, he assured him, repeatedly, of his conviction, that the precepts of the Bible had nothing to

do with the laws of commerce; that though the Jews were forbidden to take interest of Jews, Christians had a perfect right to be as hard as they liked on "brother" Christians; that there could not be the least harm in share-jobbing, for though it did, to be sure, add nothing to the wealth of the community — only conjure money out of your neighbor's pocket into your own — yet was not that all fair in trade? If a man did not know the real value of the shares he sold you, you were not bound to tell him. Again, Lancelot quite agreed with his uncle, that though covetousness might be idolatry, yet money-making could not be called covetousness; and that, on the whole, though making haste to be rich was denounced as a dangerous and ruinous temptation in St. Paul's times, that was not the slightest reason why it should be so now. All these concessions were made with a freedom which caused the good banker to suspect at times that his shrewd nephew was laughing at him in his sleeve, but he could not but subscribe to them for the sake of consistency; though as a stanch Protestant, it puzzled him a little at times to find it necessary to justify himself by getting his "infidel" nephew to explain away so much of the Bible for him. But men are accustomed to do that nowadays, and so was he.

Once only did Lancelot break out with his real sentiments when the banker was planning how to re-establish his credit; to set to work, in fact, to blow over again the same bubble which had already burst under him.

"If I were a Christian," said Lancelot, "like you, I would call this credit system of yours the devil's selfish counterfeit of God's order of mutual

love and trust; the child of that miserable dream, which, as Dr. Chalmers well said, expects universal selfishness to do the work of universal love. Look at your credit system, how — not in its abuse, but in its very essence — it carries the seeds of self-destruction. In the first place, a man's credit depends, not upon his real worth and property, but upon his reputation for property; daily and hourly he is tempted, he is forced, to puff himself, to pretend to be richer than he is."

The banker sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "We all do it, my dear boy."

"I know it. You must do it, or be more than human. There is lie the first, and look at lie the second. This credit system is founded on the universal faith and honor of men towards men. But do you think faith and honor can be the children of selfishness? Men must be chivalrous and disinterested to be honorable. And you expect them all to join in universal faith — each for his own selfish interest? You forget that if that is the prime motive, men will be honorable only as long as it suits that same self-interest."

The banker shrugged his shoulders again.

"Yes, my dear uncle," said Lancelot, "you all forget it, though you suffer for it daily and hourly; though the honorable men among you complain of the stain which has fallen on the old chivalrous good faith of English commerce, and say that now, abroad as well as at home, an Englishman's word is no longer worth other men's bonds. You see the evil, and you deplore it in disgust. Ask yourself honestly, how can you battle against it, while you allow in practice, and in theory too, except in church on Sundays,

the very falsehood from which it all springs? — that a man is bound to get wealth, not for his country, but for himself; that, in short, not patriotism, but selfishness, is the bond of all society. Selfishness can collect, not unite, a herd of cowardly wild cattle, that they may feed together, breed together, keep off the wolf and bear together. But when one of your wild cattle falls sick, what becomes of the corporate feelings of the herd then? For one man of your class who is nobly helped by his fellows, are not the thousand left behind to perish? Your Bible talks of society, not as a herd, but as a living tree, an organic individual body, a holy brotherhood, and kingdom of God. And here is an idol which you have set up instead of it!"

But the banker was deaf to all arguments. No doubt he had plenty, for he was himself a just and generous — ay, and a God-fearing man in his way, only he regarded Lancelot's young fancies as too visionary to deserve an answer; which they most probably are; else, having been broached as often as they have been, they would surely, ere now, have provoked the complete refutation which can, no doubt, be given to them by hundreds of learned votaries of so-called commerce. And here I beg my readers to recollect that I am in no way answerable for the speculations, either of Lancelot or any of his acquaintances; and that these papers have been, from beginning to end, as in name, so in nature, Yeast — an honest sample of the questions which, good or bad, are fermenting in the minds of the young of this day, and are rapidly leavening the minds of the rising generation. No doubt they are all as full of fal-

lacies as possible, but as long as the saying of the German sage stands true, that "the destiny of any nation, at any given moment, depends on the opinions of its young men under five-and-twenty," so long it must be worth while for those who wish to preserve the present order of society to justify its acknowledged evils somewhat, not only to the few young men who are interested in preserving them, but also to the many who are not.

Though, therefore, I am neither Plymouth Brother nor Communist, and as thoroughly convinced as the newspapers can make me, that to assert the duties of property is only to plot its destruction, and that a community of goods must needs imply a community of wives (as every one knows was the case with the apostolic Christians), I shall take the liberty of narrating Lancelot's fanatical conduct, without execratory comment, certain that he will still receive his just reward of condemnation; and that, if I find facts, a sensible public will find abhorrence for them. His behavior was, indeed, most singular; he absolutely refused a good commercial situation which his uncle procured him. He did not believe in being "cured by a hair of the dog that bit him;" and he refused, also, the really generous offers of the creditors, to allow him a sufficient maintenance.

"No," he said, "no more pay without work for me. I will earn my bread or starve. It seems God's will to teach me what poverty is — I will see that His intention is not left half fulfilled. I have sinned, and only in the stern delight of a just penance can I gain self-respect."

"But, my dear madman," said his uncle, "you

are just the innocent one among us all. You, at least, were only a sleeping partner."

"And therein lies my sin; I took money which I never earned, and cared as little how it was gained as how I spent it. Henceforth I shall touch no farthing which is the fruit of a system which I cannot approve. I accuse no one. Actions may vary in rightfulness, according to the age and the person. But what may be right for you because you think it right, is surely wrong for me because I think it wrong."

So, with grim determination, he sent to the hammer every article he possessed, till he had literally nothing left but the clothes in which he stood. "He could not rest," he said, "till he had pulled out all his borrowed peacock's feathers. When they were gone he should be able to see, at last, whether he was jackdaw or eagle." And wonder not, reader, at this same strength of will. The very genius, which too often makes its possessor self-indulgent in common matters, from the intense capability of enjoyment which it brings, may also, when once his whole being is stirred into motion by some great object, transform him into a hero.

And he carried a letter, too, in his bosom, night and day, which routed all coward fears and sad forebodings as soon as they arose, and converted the lonely and squalid lodging to which he had retired, into a fairy palace peopled with bright phantoms of future bliss. I need not say from whom it came.

"Beloved!" (it ran) "Darling! you need not pain yourself to tell me anything. I know all; and I know,

too (do not ask me how), your noble determination to drink the wholesome cup of poverty to the very dregs.

"Oh that I were with you! Oh that I could give you my fortune! but that is not yet, alas! in my own power. No! rather would I share that poverty with you, and strengthen you in your purpose. And yet, I cannot bear the thought of you, lonely — perhaps miserable. But, courage! though you have lost all, you have found me; and now you are knitting me to you forever — justifying my own love to me by your nobleness; and am I not worth all the world to you? I dare say this to you; you will not think me conceited. Can we misunderstand each other's hearts? And all this while you are alone! Oh! I have mourned for you! Since I heard of your misfortune I have not tasted pleasure. The light of heaven has been black to me, and I have lived only upon love. I will not taste comfort while you are wretched. Would that I could be poor like you! Every night upon the bare floor I lie down to sleep, and fancy you in your little chamber, and nestle to you, and cover that dear face with kisses. Strange! that I should dare to speak thus to you, whom a few months ago I had never heard of! Wonderful simplicity of love! How all that is prudish and artificial flees before it! I seem to have begun a new life. If I could play now, it would be only with little children. Farewell! be great — a glorious future is before you and me in you!"

Lancelot's answer must remain untold; perhaps the veil has been already too far lifted which hides the sanctuary of such love. But, alas! to his letter no second had been returned; and he felt — though he dared not confess it to himself — a gloomy presentiment of evil flit across him, as he thought of his fallen fortunes, and the altered light in which his suit would be regarded

by Argemone's parents. Once he blamed himself bitterly for not having gone to Mr. Lavington the moment he discovered Argemone's affection, and insuring — as he then might have done — his consent. But again he felt that no sloth had kept him back, but adoring reverence for his God-given treasure, and humble astonishment at his own happiness; and he fled from the thought into renewed examination into the state of the masses, the effect of which was only to deepen his own determination to share their lot.

But at the same time it seemed to him but fair to live, as long as it would last, on that part of his capital which his creditors would have given nothing for — namely, his information; and he set to work to write. But, alas! he had but a "small literary connection;" and the *entrée* of the initiated ring is not obtained in a day. . . . Besides, he would not write trash. — He was in far too grim a humor for that; and if he wrote on important subjects, able editors always were in the habit of entrusting them to old contributors, — men, in short, in whose judgment they had confidence — not to say anything which would commit the magazine to anything but its own little party-theory. And behold! poor Lancelot found himself of no party whatsoever. He was in a minority of one against the whole world, on all points, right or wrong. He had the unhappiest knack (as all geniuses have) of seeing connections, humorous or awful, between the most seemingly antipodal things; of illustrating every subject from three or four different spheres which it is anathema to mention in the same page. If he wrote a physical-science article, able editors

asked him what the deuce a scrap of high-churchism did in the middle of it? If he took the same article to a high-church magazine, the editor could not commit himself to any theory which made the earth more than six thousand years old, and was afraid that the public taste would not approve of the allusions to free-masonry and Soyer's soup. . . . And worse than that, one and all — Jew, Turk, infidel, and heretic, as well as the orthodox — joined in pious horror at his irreverence; — the shocking way he had of jumbling religion and politics — the human and the divine — the theories of the pulpit with the facts of the exchange. . . . The very atheists, who laughed at him for believing in a God, agreed that that, at least, was inconsistent with the dignity of the God — who did not exist. . . . It was Syncretism . . . Pantheism. . . .

"Very well, friends," quoth Lancelot to himself, in bitter rage, one day, "if you choose to be without God in the world, and to honor Him by denying Him . . . do so! You shall have your way; and go to the place whither it seems leading you just now, at railroad pace. But I must live. . . . Well, at least, there is some old college nonsense of mine, written three years ago, when I believed, like you, that all heaven and earth was put together out of separate bits, like a child's puzzle, and that each topic ought to have its private little pigeon-hole all to itself in a man's brain, like drugs in a chemist's shop. Perhaps it will suit you, friends; perhaps it will be system-frozen, and narrow, and dogmatic, and cowardly, and godless enough for you." . . .

So he went forth with them to market; and

behold! they were bought forthwith. There was verily a demand for such; . . . and in spite of the ten thousand ink-fountains which were daily pouring out similar Stygian liquors, the public thirst remained unslaked. "Well," thought Lancelot, "the negro race is not the only one which is afflicted with manias for eating dirt. . . . By the by, where is poor Luke?"

Ah! where was poor Luke? Lancelot had received from him one short and hurried note, blotted with tears, which told how he had informed his father; and how his father had refused to see him, and had forbid him the house; and how he had offered him an allowance of fifty pounds a year (it should have been five hundred, he said, if he had possessed it), which Luke's director, sensibly enough, had compelled him to accept. . . . And there the letter ended, abruptly, leaving the writer evidently in lower depths than he had either experienced already or expected at all.

Lancelot had often pleaded for him with his father; but in vain. Not that the good man was hard-hearted: he would cry like a child about it all to Lancelot when they sat together after dinner. But he was utterly beside himself, what with grief, shame, terror, and astonishment. On the whole, the sorrow was a real comfort to him: it gave him something beside his bankruptcy to think of; and, distracted between the two different griefs, he could brood over neither. But of the two, certainly his son's conversion was the worst in his eyes. The bankruptcy was intelligible — measurable; it was something known and classified — part of the ills which flesh (or, at

least, commercial flesh) is heir to. But going to Rome! ——

"I can't understand it. I won't believe it. It's so foolish, you see, Lancelot — so foolish — like an ass that eats thistles! . . . There must be some reason; — there must be — something we don't know, sir! Do you think they could have promised to make him a cardinal?"

Lancelot quite agreed that there were reasons for it, that they — or, at least, the banker — did not know. . . .

"Depend upon it, they promised him something — some prince-bishopric, perhaps. Else why on earth could a man go over! It's out of the course of nature!"

Lancelot tried in vain to make him understand that a man might sacrifice everything to conscience, and actually give up all worldly weal for what he thought right. The banker turned on him with angry resignation ——

"Very well — I suppose he's done right then! I suppose you'll go next! Take up a false religion, and give up everything for it! Why, then, he must be honest; and if he's honest he's in the right; and I suppose I'd better go too!"

Lancelot argued: but in vain. The idea of disinterested sacrifice was so utterly foreign to the good man's own creed and practice, that he could but see one pair of alternatives.

"Either he is a good man, or he's a hypocrite. Either he's right, or he's gone over for some vile selfish end; and what can that be but money?"

Lancelot gently hinted that there might be other selfish ends besides pecuniary ones — saving one's soul, for instance.

"Why, if he wants to save his soul, he 's right. What ought we all to do, but try to save our souls? I tell you there 's some sinister reason. They 've told him that they expect to convert England — I should like to see them do it! — and that he 'll be made a bishop. Don't argue with me, or you 'll drive me mad. I know those Jesuits?"

And as soon as he began upon the Jesuits, Lancelot prudently held his tongue. The good man had worked himself up into a perfect frenzy of terror and suspicion about them. He suspected concealed Jesuits among his footmen and his housemaids; Jesuits in his counting-house, Jesuits in his duns. . . .

"Hang it, sir! how do I know that there ain't a Jesuit listening to us now behind the curtain?"

"I 'll go and look," quoth Lancelot, and suited the action to the word.

"Well, if there ain't there might be. They 're everywhere, I tell you. That vicar of Whitford was a Jesuit. I was sure of it all along; but the man seemed so pious; and certainly he did my poor dear boy a deal of good. But he ruined you, you know. And I 'm convinced — no, don't contradict me; I tell you, I won't stand it — I 'm convinced that this whole mess of mine is a plot of those rascals; — I 'm as certain of it as if they 'd told me!"

"For what end?"

"How the deuce can I tell? Am I a Jesuit, to understand their sneaking, underhand — pah! I 'm sick of life! Nothing but rogues wherever one turns!"

And then Lancelot used to try to persuade him

to take poor Luke back again. But vague terror had steeled his heart.

"What! Why, he'd convert us all! He'd convert his sisters! He'd bring his priests in here, or his nuns disguised as ladies' maids, and we should all go over, every one of us, like a set of nine-pins!"

"You seem to think Protestantism a rather shaky cause, if it is so easy to be upset."

"Sir! Protestantism is the cause of England and Christianity, and civilization, and freedom, and common sense, sir! and that's the very reason why it's so easy to pervert men from it; and the very reason why it's a lost cause, and Popery, and Antichrist, and the gates of hell are coming in like a flood to prevail against it!"

"Well," thought Lancelot, "that is the very strangest reason for its being a lost cause! Perhaps if my poor uncle believed it really to be the cause of God Himself, he would not be in such extreme fear for it, or fancy it required such a hotbed and greenhouse culture. . . . Really, if his sisters were little girls of ten years old, who looked up to him as an oracle, there would be some reason in it. . . . But those tall, ball-going, flirting, self-satisfied cousins of mine — who would have been glad enough, either of them, two months ago, to snap up me, infidelity, bad character, and all, as a charming rich young *roué* — if they have not learnt enough Protestantism in the last five-and-twenty years to take care of themselves, Protestantism must have very few allurements, or else be very badly carried out in practice by those who talk loudest in favor of it. . . . I heard them praising O'Blareaway's 'min-

istry,' by the by, the other day. So he is up in town at last — at the summit of his ambition. Well, he may suit them. I wonder how many young creatures like Argemone and Luke he would keep from Popery!"

But there was no use arguing with a man in such a state of mind; and gradually Lancelot gave it up, in hopes that time would bring the good man to his sane wits again, and that a father's feelings would prove themselves stronger, because more divine, than a so-called Protestant's fears, though that would have been, in the banker's eyes, and in the Jesuit's also — so do extremes meet — the very reason for expecting them to be the weaker; for it is the rule with all bigots that the right cause is always a lost cause, and therefore requires — God's weapons of love, truth, and reason being well known to be too weak — to be defended, if it is to be saved, with the devil's weapons of bad logic, spite, and calumny.

At last, in despair of obtaining tidings of his cousin by any other method, Lancelot made up his mind to apply to a certain remarkable man, whose "conversion" had preceded Luke's about a year, and had, indeed, mainly caused it.

He went, . . . and was not disappointed. With the most winning courtesy and sweetness, his story and his request were patiently listened to.

"The outcome of your speech, then, my dear sir, as I apprehend it, is a request to me to send back the fugitive lamb into the jaws of the well-meaning, but still lupine wolf?"

This was spoken with so sweet and arch a smile, that it was impossible to be angry.

"On my honor, I have no wish to convert him. All I want is to have human speech of him — to hear from his own lips that he is content. Whither should I convert him? Not to my own platform — for I am nowhere. Not to that which he has left, . . . for if he could have found standing ground there, he would not have gone elsewhere for rest."

"Therefore they went out from you, because they were not of you," said the "Father," half aside.

"Most true, sir. I have felt long that argument was bootless with those whose root-ideas of Deity, man, earth, and heaven, were as utterly different from my own, as if we had been created by two different beings."

"Do you include in that catalogue those ideas of truth, love, and justice, which are Deity itself? Have you no common ground in them?"

"You are an elder and a better man than I. . . . It would be insolent in me to answer that question, except in one way, . . . and ——"

"In that you cannot answer it. Be it so. . . . You shall see your cousin. You may make what efforts you will for his re-conversion. The Catholic Church," continued he, with one of his arch, deep-meaning smiles, "is not, like popular Protestantism, driven into shrieking terror at the approach of a foe. She has too much faith in herself, and in Him who gives to her the power of truth, to expect every gay meadow to allure away her lambs from the fold."

"I assure you that your gallant permission is unnecessary. I am beginning, at least, to believe that there is a Father in Heaven who educates

His children; and I have no wish to interfere with His methods. Let my cousin go his way . . . he will learn something which he wanted, I doubt not, on his present path, even as I shall on mine. '*Se tu segui la tua stella*' is my motto. . . . Let it be his too, wherever the star may guide him. If it be a will-o'-the-wisp, and lead to the morass, he will only learn how to avoid morasses better for the future."

"*Ave Maris stella!* It is the star of Bethlehem which he follows . . . the star of Mary, immaculate, all-loving!" . . . And he bowed his head reverently. "Would that you, too, would submit yourself to that guidance! . . . You, too, would seem to want some loving heart whereon to rest." . . .

Lancelot sighed. "I am not a child, but a man; I want not a mother to pet, but a man to rule me."

Slowly his companion raised his thin hand, and pointed to the crucifix, which stood at the other end of the apartment.

"Behold him!" and he bowed his head once more . . . and Lancelot, he knew not why, did the same . . . and yet in an instant he threw his head up proudly, and answered with George Fox's old reply to the Puritans:

"I want a live Christ, not a dead one. . . . That is noble . . . beautiful . . . it may be true. . . . But it has no message for me."

"He died for you."

"I care for the world, and not myself."

"He died for the world."

"And has deserted it, as folks say now, and become — an absentee, performing His work by

deputies. . . . Do not start; the blasphemy is not mine, but those who preach it. No wonder that the owners of the soil think it no shame to desert their estates, when preachers tell them that He to whom they say all power is given in heaven and earth, has deserted His."

"What would you have, my dear sir?" asked the father.

"What the Jews had. A king of my nation, and of the hearts of my nation, who would teach soldiers, artists, craftsmen, statesmen, poets, priests, if priests there must be. I want a human lord, who understands me and the millions round me, pities us, teaches us, orders our history, civilization, development for us. I come to you, full of manhood, and you send me to a woman. I go to the Protestants, full of desires to right the world — and they begin to talk of the next life, and give up this as lost!"

A quiet smile lighted up the thin wan face, full of unfathomable thoughts; and he replied, again half to himself, —

"Am I God, to kill or to make alive, that thou sendest to me to recover a man of his leprosy? Farewell. You shall see your cousin here at noon to-morrow. You will not refuse my blessing, or my prayers, even though they be offered to a mother?"

"I will refuse nothing in the form of human love." And the father blessed him fervently, and he went out. . . .

"What a man!" said he to himself, "or rather the wreck of what a man! Oh, for such a heart, with the thews and sinews of a truly English brain!"

Next day he met Luke in that room. Their talk was short and sad. Luke was on the point of entering an order devoted especially to the worship of the Blessed Virgin.

"My father has cast me out . . . I must go to her feet. She will have mercy, though man has none."

"But why enter the order? Why take an irrevocable step?"

"Because it is irrevocable; because I shall enter an utterly new life, in which old things shall pass away, and all things become new, and I shall forget the very names of Parent, Englishman, Citizen, — the very existence of that strange Babel of man's building, whose roar and moan oppress me every time I walk the street. Oh, for solitude, meditation, penance! Oh, to make up by bitter self-punishment my ingratitude to her who has been leading me unseen, for years, home to her bosom? — The all-prevailing mother, daughter of Gabriel, spouse of Deity, flower of the earth, whom I have so long despised! Oh, to follow the example of the blessed Mary of Oignies, who every day inflicted on her most holy person eleven hundred stripes in honor of that all-perfect maiden!"

"Such an honor, I could have thought, would have pleased better Kali, the murder-goddess of the Thugs," thought Lancelot to himself; but he had not the heart to say it, and he only replied:

"So torture propitiates the Virgin? That explains the strange story I read lately, of her having appeared in the Cevennes, and informed the peasantry that she had sent the potato disease on account of their neglecting her shrines; that unless they repented, she would next year destroy their cattle; and the third year, themselves."

"Why not?" asked poor Luke.

"Why not, indeed? If God is to be capricious, proud, revengeful, why not the Son of God? And if the Son of God, why not His mother?"

"You judge spiritual feelings by the carnal test of the understanding; your Protestant horror of asceticism lies at the root of all you say. How can you comprehend the self-satisfaction, the absolute delight, of self-punishment?"

"So far from it, I have always had an infinite respect for asceticism, as a noble and manful thing — the only manful thing to my eyes left in Popery; and fast dying out of that under Jesuit influence. You recollect the quarrel between the Tablet and the Jesuits, over Faber's unlucky honesty about St. Rose of Lima? . . . But, really, as long as you honor asceticism as a means of appeasing the angry deities, I shall prefer to St. Dominic's cuirass or St. Hedwiga's chilblains, John Mytton's two hours' crawl on the ice in his shirt, after a flock of wild ducks. They both endured like heroes; but the former for a selfish, if not a blasphemous end; the latter, as a man should, to test and strengthen his own powers of endurance. . . . There, I will say no more. Go your way, in God's name. There must be lessons to be learnt in all strong and self-restraining action. . . . So you will learn something from the scourge and the hair-shirt. We must all take the bitter medicine of suffering, I suppose."

"And, therefore, I am the wiser, in forcing the draught on myself."

"Provided it be the right draught, and do not require another and still bitterer one to expel the effects of the poison. I have no faith in people's

doctoring themselves, either physically or spiritually."

"I am not my own physician; I follow the rules of an infallible Church, and the examples of her canonized saints."

"Well . . . perhaps they may have known what was best for themselves. . . . But as for you and me here, in the year 1849 . . . However, we shall argue on forever. Forgive me if I have offended you."

"I am not offended. The Catholic Church has always been a persecuted one."

"Then walk with me a little way, and I will persecute you no more."

"Where are you going?"

"To . . . To ——" Lancelot had not the heart to say whither.

"To my father's! Ah! what a son I would have been to him now, in his extreme need! . . . And he will not let me! Lancelot, is it impossible to move him? I do not want to go home again . . . to live there . . . I could not face that, though I longed but this moment to do it. I cannot face the self-satisfied, pitying looks . . . the everlasting suspicion that they suspect me to be speaking untruths, or proselytizing in secret. . . . Cruel and unjust!"

Lancelot thought of a certain letter of Luke's . . . but who was he, to break the bruised reed?

"No; I will not see him. Better thus; better vanish, and be known only according to the spirit by the spirits of saints and confessors, and their successors upon earth. No! I will die, and give no sign."

"I must see somewhat more of you, indeed."

"I will meet you here, then, two hours hence. Near that house — even along the way which leads to it — I cannot go. It would be too painful: too painful to think that you were walking towards it, — the old house where I was born and bred . . . and I shut out, — even though it be for the sake of the kingdom of heaven!"

"Or for the sake of your own share therein, my poor cousin!" thought Lancelot to himself, "which is a very different matter."

"Whither, after you have been ——?" Luke could not get out the word home.

"To Claude Mellot's."

"I will walk part of the way thither with you. But he is a very bad companion for you."

"I can't help that. I cannot live; and I am going to turn painter. It is not the road in which to find a fortune; but still, the very sign-painters live somehow, I suppose. I am going this very afternoon to Claude Mellot, and enlist. I sold the last of my treasured MSS. to a fifth-rate magazine this morning, for what it would fetch. It has been like eating one's own children — but, at least, they have fed me. So now 'to fresh fields and pastures new.'"

CHAPTER XV

DEUS EX MACHINÂ

WHEN Lancelot reached the banker's a letter was put into his hand; it bore the Whitford postmark, and Mrs. Lavington's handwriting. He tore it open; it contained a letter from Argemone, which, it is needless to say, he read before her mother's: —

"My beloved! my husband! — Yes — though you may fancy me fickle and proud — I will call you so to the last; for were I fickle I could have saved myself the agony of writing this; and as for pride, oh! how that darling vice has been crushed out of me! I have rolled at my mother's feet with bitter tears, and vain entreaties — and been refused; and yet I have obeyed her after all. We must write to each other no more. This one last letter must explain the forced silence which has been driving me mad with fears that you would suspect me. And now you may call me weak; but it is your love which has made me strong to do this — which has taught me to see with new intensity my duty, not only to you, but to every human being — to my parents. By this self-sacrifice alone can I atone to them for all my past undutifulness. Let me, then, thus be worthy of you. Hope that by this submission we may win even her to change. How calmly I write! but it is only my hand that is calm. As for my heart, read Tennyson's Fatima, and then know how I feel towards you! Yes, I love you — madly, the world would

say. I seem to understand now how women have died of love. Ay, that indeed would be blessed; for then my spirit would seek out yours, and hover over it forever! Farewell, beloved! and let me hear of you through your deeds. A feeling at my heart, which should not be, although it is, a sad one, tells me that we shall meet soon — soon."

Stupefied and sickened, Lancelot turned carelessly to Mrs. Lavington's cover, whose blameless respectability thus uttered itself:

"I cannot deceive you or myself by saying I regret that providential circumstances should have been permitted to break off a connection which I always felt to be most unsuitable; and I rejoice that the intercourse my dear child has had with you has not so far undermined her principles as to prevent her yielding the most filial obedience to my wishes on the point of her future correspondence with you. Hoping that all that has occurred will be truly blessed to you, and lead your thoughts to another world, and to a true concern for the safety of your immortal soul,

"I remain, yours truly,

"C. Lavington."

"Another world!" said Lancelot to himself. "It is most merciful of you, certainly, my dear madame, to put one in mind of the existence of another world, while such as you have their own way in this one!" and thrusting the latter epistle into the fire, he tried to collect his thoughts.

What had he lost? The oftener he asked himself, the less he found to unman him. Argemone's letters were so new a want, that the craving for them was not yet established. His intense imagination, resting on the delicious certainty of her

faith, seemed ready to fill the silence with bright hopes and noble purposes. She herself had said that he would see her soon. But yet — but yet — why did that allusion to death strike chilly through him? They were but words, — a melancholy fancy, such as women love at times to play with. He would toss it from him. At least here was another reason for bestirring himself at once to win fame in the noble profession he had chosen. And yet his brain reeled as he went upstairs to his uncle's private room.

There, however, he found a person closeted with the banker, whose remarkable appearance drove everything else out of his mind. He was a huge, shaggy, toil-worn man, the deep melancholy earnestness of whose rugged features reminded him almost ludicrously of one of Landseer's bloodhounds. But withal there was a tenderness — a genial, though covert humor playing about his massive features, which awakened in Lancelot at first sight a fantastic longing to open his whole heart to him. He was dressed like a foreigner, but spoke English with perfect fluency. The banker sat listening, quite crestfallen, beneath his intense and melancholy gaze, in which, nevertheless, there twinkled some rays of kindly sympathy.

"It was all those foreign railways," said Mr. Smith, pensively.

"And it serves you quite right," answered the stranger. "Did I not warn you of the folly and sin of sinking capital in foreign countries while English land was crying out for tillage, and English poor for employment?"

"My dear friend" (in a deprecatory tone),

"it was the best possible investment I could make."

"And pray, who told you that you were sent into the world to make investments?"

"But ——"

"But me no buts, or I won't stir a finger towards helping you. What are you going to do with this money if I procure it for you?"

"Work till I can pay back that poor fellow's fortune," said the banker, earnestly pointing to Lancelot. "And if I could clear my conscience of that, I would not care if I starved myself, hardly if my own children did."

"Spoken like a man!" answered the stranger; "work for that and I'll help you. Be a new man, once and for all, my friend. Don't even make this younker your first object. Say to yourself, not 'I will invest this money where it shall pay me most, but I will invest it where it shall give most employment to English hands, and produce most manufactures for English bodies.' In short, seek first the kingdom of God and His justice with this money of yours, and see if all other things, profits and such like included, are not added unto you."

"And you are certain you can obtain the money?"

"My good friend the Begum of the Cannibal Islands has more than she knows what to do with; and she owes me a good turn, you know."

"What are you jesting about now?"

"Did I never tell you? The new king of the Cannibal Islands, just like your European ones, ran away, and would neither govern himself nor let any one else govern; so one morning his

ministers, getting impatient, ate him, and then asked my advice. I recommended them to put his mother on the throne, who, being old and tough, would run less danger; and since then everything has gone on smoothly as anywhere else."

"Are you mad?" thought Lancelot to himself, as he stared at the speaker's matter-of-fact face.

"No, I am not mad, my young friend," quoth he, facing right round upon him, as if he had divined his thoughts.

"I — I beg your pardon, I did not speak," stammered Lancelot, abashed at a pair of eyes which could have looked down the boldest mesmerist in three seconds.

"I am perfectly well aware that you did not. I must have some talk with you: I've heard a good deal about you. You wrote those articles in the —— Review about George Sand, did you not?"

"I did."

"Well, there was a great deal of noble feeling in them, and a great deal of abominable nonsense. You seem to be very anxious to reform society?"

"I am."

"Don't you think you had better begin by reforming yourself?"

"Really, sir," answered Lancelot, "I am too old for that worn-out quibble. The root of all my sins has been selfishness and sloth. Am I to cure them by becoming still more selfish and slothful? What part of myself can I reform except my actions? and the very sin of my actions has been, as I take it, that I've been doing noth-

ing to reform others; never fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil, as your Prayer-book has it."

"*My* Prayer-book?" answered the stranger, with a quaint smile.

"Upon my word, Lancelot," interposed the banker, with a frightened look, "you must not get into an argument: you must be more respectful: you don't know to whom you are speaking."

"And I don't much care," answered he. "Life is really too grim earnest in these days to stand on ceremony. I am sick of blind leaders of the blind, of respectable preachers to the respectable, who drawl out second-hand trivialities, which they neither practise nor wish to see practised. I've had enough all my life of Scribes and Pharisees in white cravats, laying on man heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and then not touching them themselves with one of their fingers."

"Silence, sir!" roared the banker, while the stranger threw himself into a chair, and burst into a storm of laughter.

"Upon my word, friend Mammon, here's another of Hans Andersen's ugly ducks!"

"I really do not mean to be rude," said Lancelot, recollecting himself, "but I am nearly desperate. If your heart is in the right place, you will understand me! if not, the less we talk to each other the better."

"Most true," answered the stranger; "and I do understand you; and if, as I hope, we see more of each other henceforth, we will see if we cannot solve one or two of these problems between us."

At this moment Lancelot was summoned down-

stairs, and found, to his great pleasure, Tregarva waiting for him. That worthy personage bowed to Lancelot reverently and distantly.

"I am quite ashamed to intrude myself upon you, sir, but I could not rest without coming to ask whether you have had any news —" He broke down at this point in the sentence, but Lancelot understood him.

"I have no news," he said. "But what do you mean by standing off in that way, as if we were not old and fast friends? Remember, I am as poor as you are now; you may look me in the face and call me your equal, if you will, or your inferior; I shall not deny it."

"Pardon me, sir," answered Tregarva; "but I never felt what a real substantial thing rank is, as I have since this sad misfortune of yours."

"And I have never till now found out its worthlessness."

"You're wrong, sir, you are wrong; look at the difference between yourself and me. When you've lost all you have, and seven times more, you're still a gentleman. No man can take that from you. You may look the proudest duchess in the land in the face, and claim her as your equal; while I, sir, — I don't mean, though, to talk of myself — but suppose that you had loved a pious and a beautiful lady, and among all your worship of her, and your awe of her, had felt that you were worthy of her, that you could become her comforter, and her pride, and her joy, if it wasn't for that accursed gulf that men had put between you, that you were no gentleman; that you didn't know how to walk, and how to pronounce, and when to speak, and when to be

silent, not even how to handle your own knife and fork without disgusting her, or how to keep your own body clean and sweet —— Ah, sir, I see it now as I never did before, what a wall all these little defects build up round a poor man; how he longs and struggles to show himself as he is at heart, and cannot, till he feels sometimes as if he was enchanted, pent up, like folks in fairy tales, in the body of some dumb beast. But, sir," he went on, with a concentrated bitterness which Lancelot had never seen in him before, "just because this gulf which rank makes is such a deep one, therefore it looks to me all the more devilish; not that I want to pull down any man to my level; I despise my own level too much; I want to rise; I want those like me to rise with me. Let the rich be as rich as they will. — I, and those like me, covet not money, but manners. Why should not the workman be a gentleman, and a workman still? Why are they to be shut out from all that is beautiful, and delicate, and winning, and stately?"

"Now perhaps," said Lancelot, "you begin to understand what I was driving at on that night of the revel?"

"It has come home to me lately, sir, bitterly enough. If you knew what had gone on in me this last fortnight, you would know that I had cause to curse the state of things which brings a man up a savage against his will, and cuts him off, as if he were an ape or a monster, from those for whom the same Lord died, and on whom the same Spirit rests. Is that God's will, sir? No, it is the devil's will. 'Those whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder.'"

Lancelot colored, for he remembered with how much less reason he had been lately invoking in his own cause those very words. He was at a loss for an answer; but seeing, to his relief, that Tregarva had returned to his usual impassive calm, he forced him to sit down, and began questioning him as to his own prospects and employment.

About them Tregarva seemed hopeful enough. He had found out a Wesleyan minister in town who knew him, and had, by his means, after assisting for a week or two in the London City Mission, got some similar appointment in a large manufacturing town. Of the state of things he spoke more sadly than ever. "The rich cannot guess, sir, how high ill-feeling is rising in these days. It's not only those who are outwardly poorest who long for change; the middling people, sir, the small town shopkeepers especially, are nearly past all patience. One of the City Mission assured me that he has been watching them these several years past, and that nothing could beat their fortitude and industry, and their determination to stand peaceably by law and order; but yet, this last year or two, things are growing too bad to bear. Do what they will, they cannot get their bread; and when a man cannot get that, sir——"

"But what do you think is the reason of it?"

"How should I tell, sir? But if I had to say, I should say this — just what they say themselves — that there are too many of them. Go where you will, in town or country, you'll find half-a-dozen shops struggling for a custom that would only keep up one, and so they're forced to under-

sell one another. And when they've got down prices all they can by fair means, they're forced to get them down lower by foul — to sand the sugar, and sloe-leave the tea, and put — Satan only that prompts 'em knows what — into the bread; and then they don't thrive — they can't thrive; God's curse must be on them. They begin by trying to oust each other, and eat each other up; and while they're eating up their neighbors, their neighbors eat up them; and so they all come to ruin together."

"Why, you talk like Mr. Mill himself, Tregarva; you ought to have been a political economist, and not a City missionary. By the by, I don't like that profession for you."

"It's the Lord's work, sir. It's the very sending to the Gentiles that the Lord promised me."

"I don't doubt it, Paul; but you are meant for other things, if not better. There are plenty of smaller men than you to do that work. Do you think that God would have given you that strength, that brain, to waste on a work which could be done without them? Those limbs would certainly be good capital for you, if you turned a live model at the Academy. Perhaps you'd better be mine; but you can't even be that if you go to Manchester."

The giant looked hopelessly down at his huge limbs.

"Well! God only knows what use they are of just now. But as for the brains, sir — in much learning is much sorrow. One had much better work than read, I find. If I read much more about what men might be, and are not, and what

English soil might be, and is not, I shall go mad. And that puts me in mind of one thing I came here for, though, like a poor rude country fellow as I am, I clean forgot it a thinking of —— Look here, sir; you 've given me a sight of books in my time, and God bless you for it. But now I hear that — that you are determined to be a poor man like us; and that you sha'n't be, while Paul Tregarva has aught of yours. So I 've just brought all the books back, and there they lie in the hall; and may God reward you for the loan of them to His poor child! And so, sir, farewell;" and he rose to go.

"No, Paul; the books and you shall never part."

"And I say, sir, the books and you shall never part."

"Then we two can never part" — and a sudden impulse flashed over him — "and we will not part, Paul! The only man whom I utterly love, and trust, and respect on the face of God's earth, is you; and I cannot lose sight of you. If we are to earn our bread, let us earn it together; if we are to endure poverty, and sorrow, and struggle to find out the way of bettering these wretched millions round us, let us learn our lesson together, and help each other to spell it out."

"Do you mean what you say?" asked Paul, slowly.

"I do."

"Then I say what you say. Where thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Come what will, I will be your servant, for good luck or bad, forever."

"My equal, Paul, not my servant."

"I know my place, sir. When I am as learned and as well-bred as you, I shall not refuse to call myself your equal; and the sooner that day comes, the better I shall be pleased. Till then I am your friend and your brother; but I am your scholar too, and I shall not set up myself against my master."

"I have learnt more of you, Paul, than ever you have learnt of me. But be it as you will; only whatever you may call yourself, we must eat at the same table, live in the same room, and share alike all this world's good things — or we shall have no right to share together this world's bad things. If that is your bargain, there is my hand on it."

"Amen!" quoth Tregarva; and the two young men joined hands in that sacred bond — now growing rarer and rarer year by year — the utter friendship of two equal manful hearts.

"And now, sir, I have promised — and you would have me keep my promise — to go and work for the City Mission in Manchester — at least, for the next month, till a young man's place who has just left, is filled up. Will you let me go for that time? and then, if you hold your present mind, we will join home and fortunes thenceforth, and go wherever the Lord shall send us. There 's work enough of His waiting to be done. I don't doubt but if we are willing and able, He will set us about the thing we're meant for."

As Lancelot opened the door for him, he lingered on the steps, and grasping his hand, said in a low, earnest voice: "The Lord be with you, sir. Be sure that He has mighty things in store

for you, or He would not have brought you so low in the days of your youth."

"And so," as John Bunyan has it, "he went on his way;" and Lancelot saw him no more till —— But I must not outrun the order of time.

After all, this visit came to Lancelot timely. It had roused him to hope, and turned off his feelings from the startling news he had just heard. He stepped along arm in arm with Luke, cheerful, and fate-defiant, and as he thought of Tregarva's complaints, —

"The beautiful?" he said to himself, "they shall have it! At least they shall be awakened to feel their need of it, their right to it. What a high destiny, to be the artist of the people! to devote one's powers of painting, not to mimicking obsolete legends, Pagan or Popish, but to representing to the working men of England the triumphs of the Past and the yet greater triumphs of the Future!"

Luke began at once questioning him about his father.

"And is he contrite and humbled? Does he see that he has sinned?"

"In what?"

"It is not for us to judge; but surely it must have been some sin or other of his which has drawn down such a sore judgment on him."

Lancelot smiled; but Luke went on, not perceiving him.

"Ah! we cannot find out for him. Nor has he, alas! as a Protestant, much likelihood of finding out for himself. In our holy church he would have been compelled to discriminate his faults by methodic self-examination, and lay them one

by one before his priest for advice and pardon, and so start a new and free man once more."

"Do you think," asked Lancelot, with a smile, "that he who will not confess his faults either to God or to himself, would confess them to man? And would his priest honestly tell him what he really wants to know? which sin of his has called down this so-called judgment? It would be imputed, I suppose, to some vague generality, to inattention to religious duties, to idolatry of the world, and so forth. But a Romish priest would be the last person, I should think, who could tell him fairly, in the present case, the cause of his affliction; and I question whether he would give a patient hearing to any one who told it him."

"How so? Though, indeed, I have remarked that people are perfectly willing to be told they are miserable sinners, and to confess themselves such, in a general way; but if the preacher once begins to specify, to fix on any particular act or habit, he is accused of personality or uncharitableness; his hearers are ready to confess guilty to any sin but the very one with which he charges them. But, surely, this is just what I am urging against you Protestants — just what the Catholic use of confession obviates."

"Attempts to do so, you mean!" answered Lancelot. "But what if your religion preaches formally that which only remains in our religion as a fast-dying superstition? — That those judgments of God, as you call them, are not judgments at all in any fair use of the word, but capricious acts of punishment on the part of Heaven, which have no more reference to the fault which provokes them, than if you cut off a

man's finger because he made a bad use of his tongue. That is part, but only a part, of what I meant just now, by saying that people represent God as capricious, proud, revengeful."

"But do not Protestants themselves confess that our sins provoke God's anger?"

"Your common creed, when it talks rightly of God as one 'who has no passions,' ought to make you speak more reverently of the possibility of any act of ours disturbing the everlasting equanimity of the absolute Love. Why will men so often impute to God the miseries which they bring upon themselves?"

"Because, I suppose, their pride makes them more willing to confess themselves sinners than fools."

"Right, my friend; they will not remember that it is of 'their pleasant vices that God makes whips to scourge them.' Oh, I at least have felt the deep wisdom of that saying of Wilhelm Meister's harper, that it is

> 'Voices from the depth of *Nature* borne
> Which woe upon the guilty head proclaim.'

Of Nature — of those eternal laws of hers which we daily break. Yes! it is not because God's temper changes, but because God's universe is unchangeable, that such as I, such as your poor father, having sown the wind, must reap the whirlwind. I have fed my self-esteem with luxuries and not with virtue, and, losing them, have nothing left. He has sold himself to a system which is its own punishment. And yet the last place in which he will look for the cause of his misery is in that very money-mongering

to which he now clings as frantically as ever. But so it is throughout the world. Only look down over that bridge-parapet, at that huge black-mouthed sewer, vomiting its pestilential riches across the mud. There it runs, and will run, hurrying to the sea vast stores of wealth, elaborated by Nature's chemistry into the ready materials of food; which proclaim, too, by their own foul smell, God's will that they should be buried out of sight in the fruitful all-regenerating grave of earth: there it runs, turning them all into the seeds of pestilence, filth, and drunkenness. — And then, when it obeys the laws which we despise, and the pestilence is come at last, men will pray against it, and confess it to be 'a judgment for their sins;' but if you ask *what* sin, people will talk about '*les voiles d'airain*,' as Fourier says, and tell you that it is presumptuous to pry into God's secret counsels, unless, perhaps, some fanatic should inform you that the cholera has been drawn down on the poor by the endowment of Maynooth by the rich."

"It is most fearful, indeed, to think that these diseases should be confined to the poor — that a man should be exposed to cholera, typhus, and a host of attendant diseases, simply because he is born into the world an artisan; while the rich, by the mere fact of money, are exempt from such curses, except when they come in contact with those whom they call on Sunday 'their brethren,' and on week days the 'masses.'"

"Thank Heaven that you do see that, — that in a country calling itself civilized and Christian, pestilence should be the peculiar heritage of the poor! It is past all comment."

"And yet are not these pestilences a judgment, even on them, for their dirt and profligacy?"

"And how should they be clean without water? And how can you wonder if their appetites, sickened with filth and self-disgust, crave after the gin-shop for temporary strength, and then for temporary forgetfulness? Every London doctor knows that I speak the truth; would that every London preacher would tell that truth from his pulpit!"

"Then would you too say, that God punishes one class for the sins of another?"

"Some would say," answered Lancelot, half-aside, "that He may be punishing them for not demanding their *right* to live like human beings, to all those social circumstances which shall not make their children's life one long disease. But are not these pestilences a judgment on the rich, too, in the truest sense of the word? Are they not the broad, unmistakable seal to God's opinion of a state of society which confesses its economic relations to be so utterly rotten and confused, that it actually cannot afford to save yearly millions of pounds' worth of the materials of food, not to mention thousands of human lives? Is not every man who allows such things hastening the ruin of the society in which he lives, by helping to foster the indignation and fury of its victims? Look at that group of stunted, haggard artisans, who are passing us. What if one day they should call to account the landlords whose covetousness and ignorance make their dwellings hells on earth?"

By this time they had reached the artist's house.

Luke refused to enter. . . . "He had done with this world, and the painters of this world." . . . And with a tearful last farewell, he turned away up the street, leaving Lancelot to gaze at his slow, painful steps, and abject, earth-fixed mien.

"Ah!" thought Lancelot, "here is the end of *your* anthropology! At first, your ideal man is an angel. But your angel is merely an unsexed woman; and so you are forced to go back to the humanity after all — but to a woman, not a man? And this, in the nineteenth century, when men are telling us that the poetic and enthusiastic have become impossible, and that the only possible state of the world henceforward will be a universal good-humored hive, of the Franklin-Benthamite religion . . . a vast prosaic Cockaigne of steam mills for grinding sausages — for those who can get at them. And all the while, in spite of all Manchester schools, and high and dry orthodox schools, here are the strangest phantasms, new and old, sane and insane, starting up suddenly into live practical power, to give their prosaic theories the lie — Popish conversions, Mormonisms, Mesmerisms, Californias, Continental revolutions, Paris days of June. . . . Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, and yet ye cannot discern the signs of this time!"

He was ushered upstairs to the door of his studio, at which he knocked, and was answered by a loud "Come in." Lancelot heard a rustle as he entered, and caught sight of a most charming little white foot retreating hastily through the folding doors into the inner room.

The artist, who was seated at his easel, held up his brush as a signal of silence, and did not even raise his eyes till he had finished the touches on which he was engaged.

"And now — what do I see! — the last man I should have expected! I thought you were far down in the country. And what brings you to me with such serious and business-like looks?"

"I am a penniless youth ——"

"What?"

"Ruined to my last shilling, and I want to turn artist."

"Oh, ye gracious powers! Come to my arms, brother at last with me in the holy order of those who must work or starve. Long have I wept in secret over the pernicious fulness of your purse!"

"Dry your tears, then, now," said Lancelot, "for I neither have ten pounds in the world, nor intend to have till I can earn them."

"Artist!" ran on Mellot; "ah! you shall be an artist, indeed! You shall stay with me and become the English Michael Angelo; or, if you are fool enough, go to Rome, and utterly eclipse Overbeck, and throw Schadow forever into the shade."

"I fine you a supper," said Lancelot, "for that execrable attempt at a pun."

"Agreed! Here, Sabina, send to Covent Garden for huge nosegays, and get out the best bottle of Burgundy. We will pass an evening worthy of Horace, and with garlands and libations honor the muse of painting."

"Luxurious dog!" said Lancelot, "with all your cant about poverty."

As he spoke, the folding doors opened, and an

exquisite little brunette danced in from the inner room, in which, by the by, had been going on all the while a suspicious rustling, as of garments hastily arranged. She was dressed gracefully in a loose French morning-gown, down which Lancelot's eye glanced towards the little foot, which, however, was now hidden in a tiny velvet slipper. The artist's wife was a real beauty, though without a single perfect feature, except a most delicious little mouth, a skin like velvet, and clear brown eyes, from which beamed earnest simplicity and arch good humor. She darted forward to her husband's friend, while her rippling brown hair, fantastically arranged, fluttered about her neck, and seizing Lancelot's hands successively in both of hers, broke out in an accent prettily tinged with French:

"Charming! — delightful! And so you are really going to turn painter! And I have longed so to be introduced to you! Claude has been raving about you these two years; you already seem to me the oldest friend in the world. You must not go to Rome. We shall keep you, Mr. Lancelot; positively you must come and live with us — we shall be the happiest trio in London. I will make you so comfortable: you must let me cater for you — cook for you."

"And be my study sometimes?" said Lancelot, smiling.

"Ah," she said, blushing, and shaking her pretty little fist at Claude, "that madcap! how he has betrayed me! When he is at his easel, he is so in the seventh heaven that he sees nothing, thinks of nothing, but his own dreams."

At this moment a heavy step sounded on the

stairs, the door opened, and there entered, to Lancelot's astonishment, the stranger who had just puzzled him so much at his uncle's.

Claude rose reverentially, and came forward, but Sabina was beforehand with him, and running up to her visitor, kissed his hand again and again, almost kneeling to him.

"The dear master!" she cried; "what a delightful surprise! we have not seen you this fortnight past, and gave you up for lost."

"Where do you come from, my dear master?" asked Claude.

"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," answered he, smiling, and laying his finger on his lips, "my dear pupils. And you are both well and happy?"

"Perfectly, and doubly delighted at your presence to-day, for your advice will come in a providential moment for my friend here."

"Ah!" said the strange man, "well met once more! So you are going to turn painter?"

He bent a severe and searching look on Lancelot.

"You have a painter's face, young man," he said; "go on and prosper. What branch of art do you intend to study?"

"The ancient Italian painters, as my first step."

"Ancient? it is not four hundred years since Perugino died. But I should suppose you do not intend to ignore classic art?"

"You have divined rightly. I wish, in the study of the antique, to arrive at the primeval laws of unfallen human beauty."

"Were Phidias and Praxiteles, then, so primeval? the world had lasted many a thousand years

before their turn came. If you intend to begin at the beginning, why not go back at once to the garden of Eden, and there study the true antique?"

"If there were but any relics of it," said Lancelot, puzzled, and laughing.

"You would find it very near you, young man, if you had but eyes to see it."

Claude Mellot laughed significantly, and Sabina clapped her little hands.

"Yet till you take him with you, master, and show it to him, he must needs be content with the Royal Academy and the Elgin marbles."

"But to what branch of painting, pray," said the master to Lancelot, "will you apply your knowledge of the antique? Will you, like this foolish fellow here" (with a kindly glance at Claude), "fritter yourself away on Nymphs and Venuses, in which neither he nor any one else believes?"

"Historic art, as the highest," answered Lancelot, "is my ambition."

"It is well to aim at the highest, but only when it is possible for us. And how can such a school exist in England now? You English must learn to understand your own history before you paint it. Rather follow in the steps of your Turners, and Landseers, and Standfields, and Creswicks, and add your contribution to the present noble school of naturalist painters. That is the niche in the temple which God has set you English to fill up just now. These men's patient, reverent faith in Nature as they see her, their knowledge that the ideal is neither to be invented nor abstracted, but found and left where God has put it, and where alone it can be represented, in

actual and individual phenomena; — in these lies an honest development of the true idea of Protestantism, which is paving the way to the mesothetic art of the future."

"Glorious!" said Sabina: "not a single word that we poor creatures can understand!"

But our hero, who always took a virtuous delight in hearing what he could not comprehend, went on to question the orator.

"What, then, is the true idea of Protestantism?" said he.

"The universal symbolism and dignity of matter, whether in man or nature."

"But the Puritans ——?"

"Were inconsistent with themselves and with Protestantism, and therefore God would not allow them to proceed. Yet their repudiation of all art was better than the Judas-kiss which Romanism bestows on it, in the meagre eclecticism of the ancient religious schools, and of your modern Overbecks and Pugins. The only really wholesome designer of great power whom I have seen in Germany is Kaulbach; and perhaps every one would not agree with my reasons for admiring him, in this white-washed age. But you, young sir, were meant for better things than art. Many young geniuses have an early hankering, as Goethe had, to turn painters. It seems the shortest and easiest method of embodying their conceptions in visible form; but they get wiser afterwards, when they find in themselves thoughts that cannot be laid upon the canvas. Come with me — I like striking while the iron is hot; walk with me towards my lodgings, and we will discuss this weighty matter."

And with a gay farewell to the adoring little

Sabina, he passed an iron arm through Lancelot's, and marched him down into the street.

Lancelot was surprised and almost nettled at the sudden influence which he found this quaint personage was exerting over him. But he had, of late, tasted the high delight of feeling himself under the guidance of a superior mind, and longed to enjoy it once more. Perhaps they were reminiscences of this kind which stirred in him the strange fancy of a connection, almost of a likeness, between his new acquaintance and Argemone. He asked, humbly enough, why Art was to be a forbidden path to him?

"Besides, you are an Englishman, and a man of uncommon talent, unless your physiognomy belies you; and one, too, for whom God has strange things in store, or He would not have so suddenly and strangely overthrown you."

Lancelot started. He remembered that Tregarva had said just the same thing to him that very morning, and the (to him) strange coincidence sank deep into his heart.

"You must be a politician," the stranger went on. "You are bound to it as your birthright. It has been England's privilege hitherto to solve all political questions as they arise for the rest of the world; it is her duty now. Here, or nowhere, must the solution be attempted of those social problems which are convulsing more and more all Christendom. She cannot afford to waste brains like yours, while in thousands of reeking alleys, such as that one opposite us, heathens and savages are demanding the rights of citizenship. Whether they be right or wrong, is what you, and such as you, have to find out at this day."

Silent and thoughtful, Lancelot walked on by his side.

"What is become of your friend Tregarva? I met him this morning after he parted from you, and had some talk with him. I was sorely minded to enlist him. Perhaps I shall; in the meantime, I shall busy myself with you."

"In what way," asked Lancelot, "most strange sir, of whose name, much less of whose occupation, I can gain no tidings."

"My name for the time being is Barnakill. And as for business, as it is your English fashion to call new things obstinately by old names, careless whether they apply or not, you may consider me as a recruiting-sergeant; which trade, indeed, I follow, though I am no more like the popular red-coated ones than your present 'glorious constitution' is like William the Third's, or Overbeck's high art like Fra Angelico's. Farewell! When I want you, which will be most likely when you want me, I shall find you again."

The evening was passed, as Claude had promised, in a truly Horatian manner. Sabina was most piquante, and Claude interspersed his genial and enthusiastic eloquence with various wise saws of "the prophet."

"But why on earth," quoth Lancelot, at last, "do you call him a prophet?"

"Because he is one; it's his business, his calling. He gets his living thereby, as the showman did by his elephant."

"But what does he foretell?"

"Oh, son of the earth! And you went to Cambridge — are reported to have gone in for the thing, or phantom, called the tripos, and taken a

first class! . . . Did you ever look out the word 'prophetes' in Liddell and Scott?"

"Why, what do you know about Liddell and Scott?"

"Nothing, thank goodness; I never had time to waste over the crooked letters. But I have heard say that prophetes means, not a foreteller, but an out-teller — one who declares the will of a deity, and interprets his oracles. Is it not so?"

"Undeniably."

"And that he became a foreteller among heathens at least — as I consider, among all peoples whatsoever — because knowing the real bearing of what had happened, and what was happening, he could discern the signs of the times, and so had what the world calls a shrewd guess — what I, like a Pantheist as I am denominated, should call a divine and inspired foresight — of what was going to happen."

"A new notion, and a pleasant one, for it looks something like a law."

"I am no scollard, as they would say in Whitford, you know; but it has often struck me, that if folks would but believe that the Apostles talked not such very bad Greek, and had some slight notion of the received meaning of the words they used, and of the absurdity of using the same term to express nineteen different things, the New Testament would be found to be a much simpler and more severely philosophic book than 'Theologians' ('Anthroposophists' I call them) fancy."

"Where on earth did you get all this wisdom, or foolishness?"

"From the prophet, a fortnight ago."

"Who is this prophet? I will know."

"Then you will know more than I do. Sabina — light my meerschaum, there 's a darling; it will taste the sweeter after your lips." And Claude laid his delicate woman-like limbs upon the sofa, and looked the very picture of luxurious nonchalance.

"What is he, you pitiless wretch?"

"Fairest Hebe, fill our Prometheus Vinctus another glass of Burgundy, and find your guitar, to silence him."

"It was the ocean nymphs who came to comfort Prometheus — and unsandalled, too, if I recollect right," said Lancelot, smiling at Sabina. "Come, now, if he will not tell me, perhaps you will?"

Sabina only blushed, and laughed mysteriously.

"You surely are intimate with him, Claude? When and where did you meet him first?"

"Seventeen years ago, on the barricades of the three days, in the charming little pandemonium called Paris, he picked me out of a gutter, a boy of fifteen, with a musket-ball through my body; mended me, and sent me to a painter's studio. . . . The next *séjour* I had with him began in sight of the Demawend. Sabina, perhaps you might like to relate to Mr. Smith that interview, and the circumstances under which you made your first sketch of that magnificent and little-known volcano?"

Sabina blushed again — this time scarlet; and, to Lancelot's astonishment, pulled off her slipper, and brandishing it daintily, uttered some unintelligible threat, in an Oriental language, at the laughing Claude.

"Why, you must have been in the East?"

"Why not! Do you think that figure and

that walk were picked up in stay-ridden, toe-pinching England? . . . Ay, in the East; and why not elsewhere? Do you think I got my knowledge of the human figure from the live-model in the Royal Academy?"

"I certainly have always had my doubts of it. You are the only man I know who can paint muscle in motion."

"Because I am almost the only man in England who has ever seen it. Artists should go to the Cannibal Islands for that. . . . *J'ai fait le grand tour.* I should not wonder if the prophet made you take it."

"That would be very much as I chose."

"Or otherwise."

"What do you mean?"

"That if he wills you to go, I defy you to stay. Eh, Sabina!"

"Well, you are a very mysterious pair, — and a very charming one."

"So we think ourselves — as to the charmingness . . . and as for the mystery . . . '*Omnia exeunt in mysterium,*' says somebody, somewhere — or if he don't, ought to, seeing that it is so. You will be a mystery some day, and a myth, and a thousand years hence pious old ladies will be pulling caps as to whether you were a saint or a devil, and whether you did really work miracles or not, as corroborations of your ex-supra-lunar illumination on social questions. . . . Yes . . . you will have to submit, and see Bogy, and enter the Eleusinian mysteries. Eh, Sabina?"

"My dear Claude, what between the Burgundy and your usual foolishness, you seem very much inclined to divulge the Eleusinian mysteries."

"I can't well do that, my beauty, seeing that, if you recollect, we were both turned back at the vestibule, for a pair of naughty children as we are."

"Do be quiet! and let me enjoy, for once, my woman's right to the last word!"

And in this hopeful state of mystification, Lancelot went home, and dreamt of Argemone.

His uncle would, and, indeed, as it seemed, could, give him very little information on the question which had so excited his curiosity. He had met the man in India many years before, had received there from him most important kindnesses, and considered him, from experience, of oracular wisdom. He seemed to have an unlimited command of money, though most frugal in his private habits; visited England for a short time every few years, and always under a different appellation; but as for his real name, habitation, or business, here or at home, the good banker knew nothing, except that whenever questioned on them, he wandered off into Pantagruelist jokes, and ended in Cloudland. So that Lancelot was fain to give up his questions and content himself with longing for the reappearance of this inexplicable sage.

CHAPTER XVI

ONCE IN A WAY

A FEW mornings afterwards, Lancelot, as he glanced his eye over the columns of the Times, stopped short at the beloved name of Whitford. To his disgust and disappointment, it only occurred in one of those miserable cases, now of weekly occurrence, of concealing the birth of a child. He was turning from it, when he saw Bracebridge's name. Another look sufficed to show him that he ought to go at once to the colonel, who had returned the day before from Norway.

A few minutes brought him to his friend's lodging, but the Times had arrived there before him. Bracebridge was sitting over his untasted breakfast, his face buried in his hands.

"Do not speak to me," he said, without looking up. "It was right of you to come — kind of you; but it is too late."

He started, and looked wildly round him, as if listening for some sound which he expected, and then laid his head down on the table. Lancelot turned to go.

"No — do not leave me! Not alone, for God's sake, not alone!"

Lancelot sat down. There was a fearful alteration in Bracebridge. His old keen self-confident look had vanished. He was haggard,

life-weary, shame-stricken, almost abject. His limbs looked quite shrunk and powerless, as he rested his head on the table before him, and murmured incoherently from time to time:

"My own child! And I never shall have another! No second chance for those who —— Oh Mary! Mary! you might have waited — you might have trusted me! And why should you? — ay, why, indeed? And such a pretty baby, too! — just like his father!"

Lancelot laid his hand kindly on his shoulder.

"My dearest Bracebridge, the evidence proves that the child was born dead."

"They lie!" he said, fiercely, starting up. "It cried twice after it was born!"

Lancelot stood horror-struck.

"I heard it last night, and the night before that, and the night before that again, under my pillow, shrieking — stifling — two little squeaks, like a caught hare; and I tore the pillows off it — I did; and once I saw it, and it had beautiful black eyes — just like its father — just like a little miniature that used to lie on my mother's table, when I knelt at her knee, before they sent me out 'to see life,' and Eton, and the army, and Crockford's, and Newmarket, and fine gentlemen, and fine ladies, and luxury, and flattery, brought me to this! Oh, father! father! was that the only way to make a gentleman of your son? — There it is again! Don't you hear it? — under the sofa-cushions! Tear them off! Curse you! Save it!"

And, with a fearful oath, the wretched man sent Lancelot staggering across the room, and madly tore up the cushions.

A long postman's knock at the door. — He suddenly rose up quite collected.

"The letter! I knew it would come. She need not have written it: I know what is in it."

The servant's step came up the stairs. Poor Bracebridge turned to Lancelot with something of his own stately determination.

"I must be alone when I receive this letter. Stay here." And with compressed lips and fixed eyes he stalked out at the door, and shut it.

Lancelot heard him stop; then the servant's footsteps down the stairs; then the colonel's treading, slowly and heavily, went step by step up to the room above. He shut that door too. A dead silence followed. Lancelot stood in fearful suspense, and held his breath to listen. Perhaps he had fainted? No, for then he would have heard a fall. Perhaps he had fallen on the bed? He would go and see. No, he would wait a little longer. Perhaps he was praying? He had told Lancelot to pray once — he dared not interrupt him now. A slight stir — a noise as of an opening box. Thank God, he was, at least, alive! Nonsense! Why should he not be alive? What could happen to him? And yet he knew that something was going to happen. The silence was ominous — unbearable; the air of the room felt heavy and stifling, as if a thunderstorm were about to burst. He longed to hear the man raging and stamping. And yet he could not connect the thought of one so gay and full of gallant life, with the terrible dread that was creeping over him — with the terrible scene which he had just witnessed. It must be all a temporary excitement — a mistake — a hideous dream, which

the next post would sweep away. He would go and tell him so. No, he could not stir. His limbs seemed leaden, his feet felt rooted to the ground, as in long nightmare. And still the intolerable silence brooded overhead.

What broke it? A dull, stifled report, as of a pistol fired against the ground; a heavy fall; and again the silence of death.

He rushed upstairs. A corpse lay on its face upon the floor, and from among its hair, a crimson thread crept slowly across the carpet. It was all over. He bent over the head, but one look was sufficient. He did not try to lift it up.

On the table lay the fatal letter. Lancelot knew that he had a right to read it. It was scrawled, mis-spelt — but there were no tear-blots on the paper:

"SIR — I am in prison — and where are you? Cruel man! Where were you all those miserable weeks, while I was coming nearer and nearer to my shame? Murdering dumb beasts in foreign lands. You have murdered more than them. How I loved you once! How I hate you now! But I have my revenge. *Your baby cried twice after it was born!*"

Lancelot tore the letter into a hundred pieces, and swallowed them, for every foot in the house was on the stairs.

So there was terror, and confusion, and running in and out: but there were no wet eyes there except those of Bracebridge's groom, who threw himself on the body, and would not stir. And then there was a coroner's inquest; and it came out in the evidence how "the deceased had been for several days very much depressed, and had

talked of voices and apparitions;" whereat the jury — as twelve honest, good-natured Christians were bound to do — returned a verdict of temporary insanity; and in a week more the penny-a-liners grew tired; and the world, too, who never expects anything, not even French revolutions, grew tired also of repeating, "Dear me! who would have expected it?" and having filled up the colonel's place, swaggered on as usual, arm-in-arm with the flesh and the devil.

Bracebridge's death had, of course, a great effect on Lancelot's spirit. Not in the way of warning, though — such events seldom act in that way, on the highest as well as on the lowest minds. After all, your "Rakes' Progresses," and "Atheists' Deathbeds," do no more good than noble George Cruikshank's "Bottle" will, because every one knows that they are the exception, and not the rule; that the Atheist generally dies with a conscience as comfortably callous as a rhinoceros-hide; and the rake, when old age stops his power of sinning, becomes generally rather more respectable than his neighbors. The New Testament deals very little in appeals *ad terrorem;* and it would be well if some, who fancy that they follow it, would do the same, and by abstaining from making "hell-fire" the chief incentive of virtue, cease from tempting many a poor fellow to enlist on the devil's side the only manly feeling he has left — personal courage.

But yet Lancelot was affected. And when, on the night of the colonel's funeral, he opened, at hazard, Argemone's Bible, and his eyes fell on the passage which tells how "one shall be taken and another left," great honest tears of

gratitude dropped upon the page; and he fell on his knees, and in bitter self-reproach thanked the new found Upper Powers, who, as he began to hope, were leading him not in vain, — that he had yet a life before him wherein to play the man.

And now he felt that the last link was broken between him and all his late frivolous companions. All had deserted him in his ruin but this one — and he was silent in the grave. And now, from the world and all its toys and revelry, he was parted once and forever; and he stood alone in the desert, like the last Arab of a plague-stricken tribe, looking over the wreck of ancient cities, across barren sands where far rivers gleamed in the distance, that seemed to beckon him away into other climes, other hopes, other duties. Old things had passed away — when would all things become new?

Not yet, Lancelot. Thou hast still one selfish hope, one dream of bliss, however impossible, yet still cherished. Thou art a changed man — but for whose sake? For Argemone's. Is she to be thy god, then? Art thou to live for her, or for the sake of One greater than she? All thine idols are broken — swiftly the desert sands are drifting over them, and covering them in. — All but one — must that, too, be taken from thee?

One morning a letter was put into Lancelot's hands, bearing the Whitford postmark. Tremblingly he tore it open. It contained a few passionate words from Honoria. Argemone was dying of typhus fever, and entreating to see him once again; and Honoria had, with some difficulty, as she hinted, obtained leave from her parents to send for him. His last bank note

carried him down to Whitford; and, calm and determined, as one who feels that he has nothing more to lose on earth, and whose torment must henceforth become his element, he entered the Priory that evening.

He hardly spoke or looked at a soul; he felt that he was there on an errand which none understood; that he was moving towards Argemone through a spiritual world, in which he and she were alone; that in his utter poverty and hopelessness he stood above all the luxury, even above all the sorrow, around him; that she belonged to him, and to him alone; and the broken-hearted beggar followed the weeping Honoria towards his lady's chamber, with the step and bearing of a lord. He was wrong; there were pride and fierceness enough in his heart, mingled with that sense of nothingness of rank, money, chance and change, yea, death itself, of all but Love;—mingled even with that intense belief that his sorrows were but his just deserts, which now possessed all his soul. And in after years he knew that he was wrong; but so he felt at the time; and even then the strength was not all of earth which bore him manlike through that hour.

He entered the room; the darkness, the silence, the cool scent of vinegar, struck a shudder through him. The squire was sitting half idiotic and helpless, in his arm-chair. His face lighted up as Lancelot entered, and he tried to hold out his palsied hand. Lancelot did not see him. Mrs. Lavington moved proudly and primly back from the bed, with a face that seemed to say through its tears, "I at least am responsible for

nothing that occurs from this interview." Lancelot did not see her, either: he walked straight up towards the bed as if he were treading on his own ground. His heart was between his lips, and yet his whole soul felt as dry and hard as some burnt-out volcano-crater.

A faint voice — oh, how faint, how changed! — called him from within the closed curtains.

"He is there! I know it is he! Lancelot! my Lancelot!"

Silently still he drew aside the curtain; the light fell full upon her face. What a sight! Her beautiful hair cut close, a ghastly white handkerchief round her head, those bright eyes sunk and lustreless, those ripe lips baked and black and drawn; her thin hand fingering uneasily the coverlid. — It was too much for him. He shuddered and turned his face away. Quick-sighted that love is, even to the last! slight as the gesture was, she saw it in an instant.

"You are not afraid of infection?" she said faintly. "I was not."

Lancelot laughed aloud, as men will at strangest moments, sprung towards her with open arms, and threw himself on his knees beside the bed. With sudden strength she rose upright, and clasped him in her arms.

"Once more!" she sighed, in a whisper to herself, "Once more on earth!" And the room, and the spectators, and disease itself faded from around them like vain dreams, as she nestled closer and closer to him, and gazed into his eyes, and passed her shrunken hand over his cheeks, and toyed with his hair, and seemed to drink in magnetic life from his embrace.

No one spoke or stirred. They felt that an awful and blessed spirit overshadowed the lovers, and were hushed, as if in the sanctuary of God.

Suddenly again she raised her head from his bosom, and in a tone in which her old queenliness mingled strangely with the saddest tenderness:

"All of you go away now; I must talk to my husband alone."

They went, leading out the squire, who cast puzzled glances toward the pair, and murmured to himself that "she was sure to get well now Smith was come: everything went right when he was in the way."

So they were left alone.

"I do not look so very ugly, my darling, do I? Not so very ugly? though they have cut off all my poor hair, and I told them so often not! But I kept a lock for you;" and feebly she drew from under the pillow a long auburn tress, and tried to wreathe it round his neck, but could not, and sunk back.

Poor fellow! he could bear no more. He hid his face in his hands, and burst into a long low weeping.

"I am very thirsty, darling; reach me —— No, I will drink no more, except from your dear lips."

He lifted up his head, and breathed his whole soul upon her lips; his tears fell on her closed eyelids.

"Weeping? No. — You must not cry. See how comfortable I am. They are all so kind — soft bed, cool room, fresh air, sweet drinks, sweet scents. Oh, so different from *that* room!"

"What room? — my own!"

"Listen, and I will tell you. Sit down — put your arm under my head — so. When I am on your bosom I feel so strong. God! let me last to tell him all. It was for that I sent for him."

And then, in broken words, she told him how she had gone up to the fever patient at Ashy, on the fatal night on which Lancelot had last seen her. Shuddering, she hinted at the horrible filth and misery she had seen, at the foul scents which had sickened her. A madness of remorse, she said, had seized her. She had gone, in spite of her disgust, to several houses which she found open. There were worse cottages there than even her father's; some tradesmen in a neighboring town had been allowed to run up a set of rack rent hovels. — Another shudder seized her when she spoke of them; and from that point in her story all was fitful, broken, like the images of a hideous dream. "Every instant those foul memories were defiling her nostrils. A horrible loathing had taken possession of her, recurring from time to time, till it ended in delirium and fever. A scent-fiend was haunting her night and day," she said. "And now the curse of the Lavingtons had truly come upon her. To perish by the people whom they made. Their neglect, cupidity, oppression, are avenged on me! Why not? Have I not wantoned in down and perfumes, while they, by whose labor my luxuries were bought, were pining among scents and sounds, one day of which would have driven me mad! And then they wonder why men turn Chartists! There are those horrible scents again! Save me from them! Lancelot — darling! Take me to the fresh air! I choke! I am fester-

ing away! The Nun-pool! Take all the water, every drop, and wash Ashy clean again! Make a great fountain in it — beautiful marble — to bubble and gurgle, and trickle and foam, for ever and ever, and wash away the sins of the Lavingtons, that the little rosy children may play round it, and the poor toil-bent woman may wash — and wash — and drink —— Water! water! I am dying of thirst."

He gave her water, and then she lay back and babbled about the Nun-pool sweeping "all the houses of Ashy into one beautiful palace, among great flower-gardens, where the school children will sit and sing such merry hymns, and never struggle with great pails of water up the hill of Ashy any more."

. . . . . .

"You will do it! darling! Strong, wise, noble-hearted that you are! Why do you look at me? You will be rich some day. You will own land, for you are worthy to own it. Oh that I could give you Whitford! No! It was mine too long — therefore I die! because I —— Lord Jesus! have I not repented of my sin?"

Then she grew calm once more. A soft smile crept over her face, as it grew sharper and paler every moment. Faintly she sank back on the pillows, and faintly whispered to him to kneel and pray. He obeyed her mechanically. . . . "No — not for me, for them — for them, and for yourself — that you may save them whom I never dreamt that I was bound to save."

And he knelt and prayed . . . what, he alone and those who heard his prayer, can tell. . . .

. . . . . .

When he lifted up his head at last, he saw that Argemone lay motionless. For a moment he thought she was dead, and frantically sprang to the bell. The family rushed in with the physician. She gave some faint token of life, but none of consciousness. The doctor sighed, and said that her end was near. Lancelot had known that all along.

"I think, sir, you had better leave the room," said Mrs. Lavington; and followed him into the passage.

What she was about to say remained unspoken; for Lancelot seized her hand in spite of her, with frantic thanks for having allowed him this one interview, and entreaties that he might see her again, if but for one moment.

Mrs. Lavington, somewhat more softly than usual, said, "That the result of this visit had not been such as to make a second desirable — that she had no wish to disturb her daughter's mind at such a moment with earthly regrets."

"Earthly regrets!" How little she knew what had passed there! But if she had known, would she have been one whit softened? For, indeed, Argemone's spirituality was not in her mother's language. And yet the good woman had prayed, and prayed, and wept bitter tears, by her daughter's bedside, day after day; but she had never heard her pronounce the talismanic formula of words, necessary in her eyes to ensure salvation; and so she was almost without hope for her. Oh, Bigotry! Devil, who turnest God's love into man's curse! are not human hearts hard and blind enough of themselves, without thy cursed help?

For one moment a storm of unutterable pride and rage convulsed Lancelot — the next instant love conquered; and the strong proud man threw himself on his knees at the feet of the woman he despised, and with wild sobs entreated for one moment more — one only!

At that instant a shriek from Honoria resounded from the sick-chamber. Lancelot knew what it meant, and sprang up, as men do when shot through the heart. — In a moment he was himself again. A new life had begun for him — alone.

"You will not need to grant my prayer, madam," he said calmly: "Argemone is dead."

CHAPTER XVII

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

LET us pass over the period of dull, stupefied misery that followed, when Lancelot had returned to his lonely lodging, and the excitement of his feelings had died away. It is impossible to describe that which could not be separated into parts, in which there was no foreground, no distance, but only one dead, black, colorless present. After a time, however, he began to find that fancies, almost ridiculously trivial, arrested and absorbed his attention; even as when our eyes have become accustomed to darkness, every light-colored mote shows luminous against the void blackness of night. So we are tempted to unseemly frivolity in churches, and at funerals, and all most solemn moments; and so Lancelot found his imagination fluttering back, half amused, to every smallest circumstance of the last few weeks, as objects of mere curiosity, and found with astonishment that they had lost their power of paining him. Just as victims on the rack have fallen, it is said, by length of torture, into insensibility, and even calm repose, his brain had been wrought until all feeling was benumbed. He began to think what an interesting autobiography his life might make; and the events of the last few years began to arrange themselves in a most

attractive dramatic form. He began even to work out a scene or two, and where "motives" seemed wanting, to invent them here and there. He sat thus for hours silent over his fire, playing with his old self, as though it were a thing which did not belong to him — a suit of clothes which he had put off, and which,

> "For that it was too rich to hang by the wall,
> It must be ripped,"

and then pieced and dizened out afresh as a toy. And then again he started away from his own thoughts, at finding himself on the edge of that very gulf, which, as Mellot had lately told him, Barnakill denounced as the true hell of genius, where Art is regarded as an end and not a means, and objects are interesting, not in as far as they form our spirits, but in proportion as they can be shaped into effective parts of some beautiful whole. But whether it was a temptation or none, the desire recurred to him again and again. He even attempted to write, but sickened at the sight of the first words. He turned to his pencil, and tried to represent with it one scene at least; and with the horrible calmness of some self-torturing ascetic, he sat down to sketch a drawing of himself and Argemone on her dying day, with her head upon his bosom for the last time — and then tossed it angrily into the fire, partly because he felt just as he had in his attempts to write, that there was something more in all these events than he could utter by pen or pencil, than he could even understand; principally because he could not arrange the attitudes gracefully enough. And now, in front of the stern realities of sorrow and death, he

began to see a meaning in another mysterious saying of Barnakill's, which Mellot was continually quoting, that "Art was never Art till it was more than Art; that the Finite only existed as a body of the Infinite; and that the man of genius must first know the Infinite, unless he wished to become not a poet, but a maker of idols." Still he felt in himself a capability, nay, an infinite longing to speak; though what he should utter, or how, — whether as poet, social theorist, preacher, he could not yet decide. Barnakill had forbidden him painting, and though he hardly knew why, he dared not disobey him. But Argemone's dying words lay on him as a divine command to labor. All his doubts, his social observations, his dreams of the beautiful and the blissful, his intense perception of social evils, his new-born hope — faith it could not yet be called — in a ruler and deliverer of the world, all urged him on to labor: but at what? He felt as if he were the demon in the legend, condemned to twine endless ropes of sand. The world, outside which he now stood for good and evil, seemed to him like some frantic whirling waltz; some serried struggling crowd, which rushed past him in aimless confusion, without allowing him time or opening to take his place among their ranks: and as for wings to rise above, and to look down upon the uproar, where were they? His melancholy paralyzed him more and more. He was too listless even to cater for his daily bread by writing his articles for the magazines. Why should he? He had nothing to say. Why should he pour out words and empty sound, and add one more futility to the herd of "prophets that had become wind, and

had no truth in them"? Those who could write without a conscience, without an object except that of seeing their own fine words, and filling their own pockets — let them do it: for his part he would have none of it. But his purse was empty, and so was his stomach; and as for asking assistance of his uncle, it was returning like the dog to his vomit. So one day he settled all bills with his last shilling, tied up his remaining clothes in a bundle, and stoutly stepped forth into the street to find a job — to hold a horse if nothing better offered; when, behold! on the threshold he met Barnakill himself.

"Whither away?" said that strange personage. "I was just going to call on you."

"To earn my bread by the labor of my hands. So our fathers all began."

"And so their sons must all end. Do you want work?"

"Yes, if you have any."

"Follow me, and carry a trunk home from a shop to my lodgings."

He strode off, with Lancelot after him; entered a mathematical instrument maker's shop in the neighboring street, and pointed out a heavy corded case to Lancelot, who, with the assistance of the shopman, got it on his shoulders; and trudging forth through the streets after his employer, who walked before him silent and unregarding, felt himself for the first time in his life in the same situation as nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of Adam's descendants, and discovered somewhat to his satisfaction that when he could once rid his mind of its old superstition that every one was looking at him, it mattered very little

whether the burden carried were a deal trunk or a Downing Street despatch-box.

His employer's lodgings were in St. Paul's Churchyard. Lancelot set the trunk down inside the door.

"What do you charge?"

"Sixpence."

Barnakill looked him steadily in the face, gave him the sixpence, went in, and shut the door.

Lancelot wandered down the street, half amused at the simple test which had just been applied to him, and yet sickened with disappointment; for he had cherished a mysterious fancy that with this strange being all his hopes of future activity were bound up. Tregarva's month was nearly over, and yet no tidings of him had come. Mellot had left London on some mysterious errand of the prophet's, and for the first time in his life he seemed to stand utterly alone. He was at one pole, and the whole universe at the other. It was in vain to tell himself that his own act had placed him there; that he had friends to whom he might appeal. He would not, he dare not, accept outward help, even outward friendship, however hearty and sincere, at that crisis of his existence. It seemed a desecration of its awfulness to find comfort in anything but the highest and the deepest. And the glimpse of that which he had attained seemed to have passed away from him again, — seemed to be something which, as it had arisen with Argemone, was lost with her also, — one speck of the far blue sky which the rolling clouds had covered in again. As he passed under the shadow of the huge soot-blackened cathedral,

and looked at its grim spiked railings and closed doors, it seemed to him a symbol of the spiritual world, clouded and barred from him. He stopped and looked up, and tried to think. The rays of the setting sun lighted up in clear radiance the huge cross on the summit. Was it an omen? Lancelot thought so; but at that instant he felt a hand on his shoulder, and looked round. It was that strange man again.

"So far well," said he. "You are making a better day's work than you fancy, and earning more wages. For instance, here is a packet for you."

Lancelot seized it, trembling, and tore it open. It was directed in Honoria's handwriting.

"Whence had you this?" said he.

"Through Mellot, through whom I can return your answer, if one be needed."

The letter was significant of Honoria's character. It busied itself entirely about facts, and showed the depth of her sorrow by making no allusion to it. "Argemone, as Lancelot was probably aware, had bequeathed to him the whole of her own fortune at Mrs. Lavington's death, and had directed that various precious things of hers should be delivered over to him immediately. Her mother, however, kept her chamber under lock and key, and refused to allow an article to be removed from its accustomed place. It was natural, in the first burst of her sorrow, and Lancelot would pardon." All his drawings and letters had been, by Argemone's desire, placed with her in her coffin. Honoria had been only able to obey her in sending a favorite ring of hers, and with it the last stanzas which she had composed before her death:

"Twin stars, aloft in ether clear,
Around each other roll away,
Within one common atmosphere
Of their own mutual light and day.

"And myriad happy eyes are bent
Upon their changeless love alway;
As, strengthened by their one intent,
They pour the flood of life and day,

"So we, through this world's waning night,
Shall, hand in hand, pursue our way;
Shed round us order, love, and light,
And shine unto the perfect day."

The precious relic, with all its shattered hopes, came at the right moment to soften his hard-worn heart. The sight, the touch of it, shot like an electric spark through the black stifling thunder-cloud of his soul, and dissolved it in refreshing showers of tears.

Barnakill led him gently within the area of the railings, where he might conceal his emotion, and it was but a few seconds before Lancelot had recovered his self-possession and followed him up the steps through the wicket door.

They entered. The afternoon service was proceeding. The organ droned sadly in its iron cage to a few musical amateurs. Some nursery maids and foreign sailors stared about within the spiked felon's dock which shut off the body of the cathedral, and tried in vain to hear what was going on inside the choir. As a wise author — a Protestant, too — has lately said, "the scanty service rattled in the vast building, like a dried kernel too small for its shell." The place breathed imbecility, and unreality, and sleepy life-in-death, while the whole nineteenth century went roaring on its way outside.

And as Lancelot thought, though only as a *dilettante*, of old St. Paul's, the morning star and focal beacon of England through centuries and dynasties, from old Augustine and Mellitus, up to those Paul's Cross sermons whose thunders shook thrones, and to noble Wren's masterpiece of art, he asked, "Whither all this? Coleridge's dictum, that a cathedral is a petrified religion, may be taken to bear more meanings than one. When will life return to this cathedral system?"

"When was it ever a living system?" answered the other. "When was it ever anything but a transitionary makeshift since the dissolution of the monasteries?"

"Why, then, not away with it at once?"

"You English have not done with it yet. At all events, it is keeping your cathedrals rain-proof for you, till you can put them to some better use than now."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime there is life enough in them; life that will wake the dead some day. Do you hear what those choristers are chanting now?"

"Not I," said Lancelot; "nor any one round us, I should think."

"That is our own fault, after all; for we were not good churchmen enough to come in time for vespers."

"Are you a churchman then?"

"Yes, thank God. There may be other churches than those of Europe or Syria, and right Catholic ones, too. But, shall I tell you what they are singing? 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry

with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.' Is there no life, think you, in those words, spoken here every afternoon in the name of God?"

"By hirelings, who neither care nor understand ——"

"Hush. Be not hasty with imputations of evil, within walls dedicated to and preserved by the All-good. Even should the speakers forget the meaning of their own words, to my sense, perhaps, that may just now leave the words more entirely God's. At all events, confess that whatever accidental husks may have clustered round it, here is a germ of Eternal Truth. No, I dare not despair of you English, as long as I hear your priesthood forced by Providence, even in spite of themselves, thus to speak God's words about an age in which the condition of the poor, and the rights and duties of man, are becoming the rallying-point for all thought and all organization."

"But does it not make the case more hopeless that such words have been spoken for centuries, and no man regards them?"

"You have to blame for that the people, rather than the priest. As they are, so will he be, in every age and country. He is but the index which the changes of their spiritual state move up and down the scale: and as they will become in England in the next half century, so will he become also."

"And can these dry bones live?" asked Lancelot, scornfully.

"Who are you to ask? What were you three months ago? for I know well your story. But do

you remember what the prophet saw in the Valley of Vision? How first that those same dry bones shook and clashed together, as if uneasy because they were disorganized; and how they then found flesh and stood upright: and yet there was no life in them, till at last the Spirit came down and entered into them? Surely there is shaking enough among the bones now! It is happening to the body of your England as it did to Adam's after he was made. It lay on earth, the rabbis say, forty days before the breath of life was put into it, and the devil came and kicked it; and it sounded hollow, as England is doing now; but that did not prevent the breath of life coming in good time, nor will it in England's case."

Lancelot looked at him with a puzzled face.

"You must not speak in such deep parables to so young a learner."

"Is my parable so hard, then? Look around you and see what is the characteristic of your country and of your generation at this moment. What a yearning, what an expectation, amid infinite falsehoods and confusions, of some nobler, more chivalrous, more godlike state! Your very costermonger trolls out his belief that 'there's a good time coming,' and the hearts of *gamins*, as well as millenarians, answer, 'True!' Is not that a clashing among the dry bones? And as for flesh, what new materials are springing up among you every month, spiritual and physical, for a state such as 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard'?—railroads, electric telegraphs, associate-lodging-houses, club-houses, sanitary reforms, experimental schools, chemical agriculture, a

matchless school of inductive science, an equally matchless school of naturalist painters, — and all this in the very workshop of the world! Look, again, at the healthy craving after religious art and ceremonial, — the strong desire to preserve that which has stood the test of time; and on the other hand, at the manful resolution of your middle classes to stand or fall by the Bible alone, — to admit no innovations in worship which are empty of instinctive meaning. Look at the enormous amount of practical benevolence which now struggles in vain against evil, only because it is as yet private, desultory, divided. How dare you, young man, despair of your own nation, while its nobles can produce a Carlisle, an Ellesmere, an Ashley, a Robert Grosvenor, — while its middle classes can beget a Faraday, a Stephenson, a Brooke, an Elizabeth Fry? See, I say, what a chaos of noble materials is here, — all confused, it is true, — polarized, jarring, and chaotic, — here bigotry, there self-will, superstition, sheer atheism often, but only waiting for the one inspiring Spirit to organize, and unite, and consecrate this chaos into the noblest polity the world ever saw realized! What a destiny may be that of your land, if you have but the faith to see your own honor! Were I not of my own country, I would be an Englishman this day."

"And what is your country?" asked Lancelot. "It should be a noble one which breeds such men as you."

The stranger smiled.

"Will you go thither with me?"

"Why not? I long for travel, and truly I am

sick of my own country. When the Spirit of which you speak," he went on, bitterly, "shall descend, I may return; till then England is no place for the penniless."

"How know you that the Spirit is not even now poured out? Must your English Pharisees and Sadducees, too, have signs and wonders ere they believe? Will man never know that 'the kingdom of God comes not by observation'? that now, as ever, His promise stands true, — 'Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world'? How many inspired hearts even now may be cherishing in secret the idea which shall reform the age, and fulfil at once the longings of every sect and rank?"

"Name it to me, then!"

"Who can name it? Who can even see it, but those who are like Him from whom it comes? Them a long and stern discipline awaits. Would you be of them, you must, like the Highest who ever trod this earth, go fasting into the wilderness, and, among the wild beasts, stand alone face to face with the powers of Nature."

"I will go where you shall bid me. I will turn shepherd among the Scottish mountains — live as an anchorite in the solitudes of Dartmoor. But to what purpose? I have listened long to Nature's voice, but even the whispers of a spiritual presence which haunted my childhood have died away, and I hear nothing in her but the grinding of the iron wheels of mechanical necessity."

"Which is the will of God. Henceforth you shall study, not Nature, but Him. Yet as for place — I do not like your English primitive formations, where earth, worn out with strug-

gling, has fallen wearily asleep. No, you shall rather come to Asia, the oldest and yet the youngest continent, — to our volcanic mountain ranges, where her bosom still heaves with the creative energy of youth, around the primeval cradle of the most ancient race of men. Then, when you have learnt the wondrous harmony between man and his dwelling-place, I will lead you to a land where you shall see the highest spiritual cultivation in triumphant contact with the fiercest energies of matter; where men have learnt to tame and use alike the volcano and the human heart, where the body and the spirit, the beautiful and the useful, the human and the divine, are no longer separate, and men have embodied to themselves on earth an image of the 'city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'"

"Where is this land?" said Lancelot, eagerly.

"Poor human nature must have its name for everything. You have heard of the country of Prester John, that mysterious Christian empire, rarely visited by European eye?"

"There are legends of two such," said Lancelot, "an Ethiopian and an Asiatic one; and the Ethiopian, if we are to believe Colonel Harris's Journey to Shoa, is a sufficiently miserable failure."

"True; the day of the Chamitic race is past; you will not say the same of our Caucasian empire. To our race the present belongs, — to England, France, Germany, America, — to us. Will you see what we have done, and perhaps bring home, after long wanderings, a message for your country which may help to unravel the tangled web of this strange time?"

"I will," said Lancelot, "now, this moment. And yet, no. There is one with whom I have promised to share all future weal and woe. Without him I can take no step."

"Tregarva?"

"Yes — he. What made you guess that I spoke of him?"

"Mellot told me of him, and of you, too, six weeks ago. He is now gone to fetch him from Manchester. I cannot trust him here in England yet. The country made him sad; London has made him mad; Manchester may make him bad. It is too fearful a trial even for his faith. I must take him with us."

"What interest in him — not to say what authority over him — have you?"

"The same which I have over you. You will come with me; so will he. It is my business, as my name signifies, to save the children alive whom European society leaves carelessly and ignorantly to die. And as for my power, I come," said he, with a smile, "from a country which sends no one on its errands without first thoroughly satisfying itself as to his power of fulfilling them."

"If he goes, I go with you."

"And he will go. And yet, think what you do. It is a fearful journey. They who travel it, even as they came naked out of their mother's womb — even as they return thither, and carry nothing with them of all which they have gotten in this life, so must those who travel to my land."

"What? Tregarva? Is he, too, to give up all? I had thought that I saw in him a precious

possession, one for which I would barter all my scholarship, my talents, — ay — my life itself."

"A possession worth your life? What then?"

"Faith in an unseen God."

"Ask him whether he would call that a possession — his own in any sense?"

"He would call it a revelation to him."

"That is, a taking of the veil from something which was behind the veil already."

"Yes."

"And which may therefore just as really be behind the veil in other cases without its presence being suspected."

"Certainly."

"In what sense, now, is that a possession? Do you possess the sun because you see it? Did Herschel create Uranus by discovering it; or even increase, by an atom, its attraction on one particle of his own body?"

"Whither is all this tending?"

"Hither. Tregarva does not possess his Father and his Lord; he is possessed by them."

"But he would say — and I should believe him — that he has seen and known them, not with his bodily eyes, but with his soul, heart, imagination — call it what you will. All I know is, that between him and me there is a great gulf fixed."

"What! seen and known them utterly? comprehended them? Are they not infinite, incomprehensible? Can the less comprehend the greater?"

"He knows, at least, enough of them to make him what I am not."

"That is, he knows something of them. And

may not you know something of them also? — enough to make you what he is not?"

Lancelot shook his head in silence.

"Suppose that you had met and spoken with your father, and loved him when you saw him, and yet were not aware of the relation in which you stood to him, still you would know him?"

"Not the most important thing of all — that he was my father."

"Is that the most important thing? Is it not more important that he should know that you were his son? That he should support, guide, educate you, even though unseen? Do you not know that some one has been doing that?"

"That I have been supported, guided, educated, I know full well; but by whom I know not. And I know, too, that I have been punished. And therefore — therefore I cannot free the thought of a Him — of a Person — only of a Destiny, of Laws and Powers, which have no faces wherewith to frown awful wrath upon me! If it be a Person who has been leading me, I must go mad, or know that He has forgiven!"

"I conceive that it is He, and not punishment, which you fear?"

Lancelot was silent a moment. . . . "Yes. He, and not hell at all, is what I fear. He can inflict no punishment on me worse than the inner hell which I have felt already, many and many a time."

"*Bona verba!* That is an awful thing to say: but better this extreme than the other. . . . And you would — what?"

"Be pardoned."

"If He loves you, He has pardoned you already."

"How do I know that He loves me?"

"How does Tregarva?"

"He is a righteous man, and I——"

"Am a sinner. He would, and rightly, call himself the same."

"But he knows that God loves him — that he is God's child."

"So, then, God did not love him till he caused God to love him, by knowing that He loved him? He was not God's child till he made himself one, by believing that he was one when as yet he was not? I appeal to common sense and logic. . . . It was revealed to Tregarva that God had been loving him while he was yet a bad man. If He loved him, in spite of his sin, why should He not have loved you?"

"If He had loved me, would He have left me in ignorance of Himself? For if He be, to know Him is the highest good."

"Had He left Tregarva in ignorance of Himself?"

"No. . . . Certainly, Tregarva spoke of his conversion as of a turning to one of whom he had known all along, and disregarded."

"Then do you turn, like him, to Him whom you have known all along, and disregarded."

"I?"

"Yes — you! If half I have heard and seen of you be true, He has been telling you more, and not less, of Himself than He does to most men. You, for aught I know, may know more of Him than Tregarva does. The gulf between you and him is this: he has obeyed what he knew — and you have not." . . .

Lancelot paused a moment, then —

"No! — do not cheat me! You said once that you were a churchman."

"So I am. A Catholic of the Catholics. What then?"

"Who is He to whom you ask me to turn? You talk to me of Him as my Father; but you talk of Him to men of your own creed as the Father. You have mysterious dogmas of a Three in One. I know them. . . . I have admired them. In all their forms — in the Vedas, in the Neo-Platonists, in Jacob Behmen, in your Catholic creeds, in Coleridge, and the Germans from whom he borrowed, I have looked at them, and found in them beautiful phantasms of philosophy, . . . all but scientific necessities; . . . but ——"

"But what?"

"I do not want cold abstract necessities of logic: I want living practical facts. If those mysterious dogmas speak of real and necessary properties of His being, they must be necessarily interwoven in practice with His revelation of Himself?"

"Most true. But how would you have Him unveil Himself?"

"By unveiling Himself."

"What? To your simple intuition? That was Semele's ambition. . . . You recollect the end of that myth. You recollect, too, as you have read the Neo-Platonists, the result of their similar attempt."

"Idolatry and magic."

"True; and yet, such is the ambition of man, you who were just now envying Tregarva, are

already longing to climb even higher than Saint Theresa."

"I do not often indulge in such an ambition. But I have read in your Schoolmen tales of a Beatific Vision; how that the highest good for man was to see God."

"And did you believe that?"

"One cannot believe the impossible — only regret its impossibility."

"Impossibility? You can only see the Uncreate in the Create — the Infinite in the Finite — the absolute good in that which is like the good. Does Tregarva pretend to more? He sees God in His own thoughts and consciousnesses, and in the events of the world around him, imaged in the mirror of his own mind. Is your mirror, then, so much narrower than his?"

"I have none. I see but myself, and the world, and far above them, a dim awful Unity, which is but a notion."

"Fool! — and slow of heart to believe! Where else would you see Him but in yourself and in the world? They are all things cognizable to you. Where else, but everywhere, would you see Him whom no man hath seen, or can see?"

"When He shows Himself to me in them, then I may see Him. But now ——"

"You have seen Him; and because you do not know the name of what you see — or rather will not acknowledge it — you fancy that it is not there."

"How in His name? What have I seen?"

"Ask yourself. Have you not seen, in your fancy, at least, an ideal of man, for which you spurned (for Mellot has told me all) the merely

negative angelic — the merely receptive and indulgent feminine-ideals of humanity, and longed to be a man, like that ideal and perfect man?"

"I have."

"And what was your misery all along? Was it not that you felt you ought to be a person with a one inner unity, a one practical will, purpose, and business given to you — not invented by yourself — in the great order and harmony of the universe, — and that you were not one? — That your self-willed fancies, and self-pleasing passions, had torn you in pieces, and left you inconsistent, dismembered, helpless, purposeless? That, in short, you were below your ideal, just in proportion as you were not a person?"

"God knows you speak truth!"

"Then must not that ideal of humanity be a person himself? — Else how can he be the ideal man? Where is your logic? An impersonal ideal of a personal species! . . . And what is the most special peculiarity of man? Is it not that he alone of creation is a son, with a Father to love and to obey? Then must not the ideal man be a son also? And last, but not least, is it not the very property of man that he is a spirit invested with flesh and blood? Then must not the ideal man have, once at least, taken on himself flesh and blood also? Else, how could he fulfil his own idea?"

"Yes . . . Yes . . . That thought, too, has glanced through my mind at moments, like a lightning-flash; till I have envied the old Greeks their faith in a human Zeus, son of Kronos — a human Phoibos, son of Zeus. But I could not rest in them. They are noble. But are they —

are any — perfect ideals? The one thing I did, and do, and will believe, is the one which they do not fulfil — that man is meant to be the conqueror of the earth, matter, nature, decay, death itself, and to conquer them, as Bacon says, by obeying them."

"Hold it fast; — but follow it out, and say boldly, the ideal of humanity must be one who has conquered nature — one who rules the universe — one who has vanquished death itself; and conquered them, as Bacon says, not by violating, but by submitting to them. Have you never heard of one who is said to have done this? How do you know that in this ideal which you have seen, you have not seen the Son — the perfect Man, who died and rose again, and sits forever Healer, and Lord, and Ruler of the universe? . . . Stay — do not answer me. Have you not, besides, had dreams of an All-Father — from whom, in some mysterious way, all things and beings must derive their source, and that Son — if my theory be true — among the rest, and above all the rest?"

"Who has not? But what more dim or distant — more drearily, hopelessly notional, than that thought?"

"Only the thought that there is none. But the dreariness was only in your own inconsistency. If He be the Father of all, He must be the Father of persons — He Himself therefore a Person. He must be the Father of all in whom dwell personal qualities, power, wisdom, creative energy, love, justice, pity. Can He be their Father, unless all these very qualities are infinitely His? Does He now look so terrible to you?"

"I have had this dream, too; but I turned away from it in dread."

"Doubtless you did. Some day you will know why. Does that former dream of a human Son relieve this dream of none of its awfulness? May not the type be beloved for the sake of its Antitype, even if the very name of All-Father is no guarantee for His paternal pity! . . . But you have had this dream. How know you, that in it you were not allowed a glimpse, however dim and distant, of Him whom the Catholics call the Father?"

"It may be; but ——"

"Stay again. Had you never the sense of a Spirit in you — a will, an energy, an inspiration, deeper than the region of consciousness and reflection, which, like the wind, blew where it listed, and you heard the sound of it ringing through your whole consciousness, and yet knew not whence it came, or whither it went, or why it drove you on to dare and suffer, to love and hate; to be a fighter, a sportsman, an artist ——"

"And a drunkard!" added Lancelot, sadly.

"And a drunkard. But did it never seem to you that this strange wayward spirit, if anything, was the very root and core of your own personality? And had you never a craving for the help of some higher, mightier spirit, to guide and strengthen yours; to regulate and civilize its savage and spasmodic self-will; to teach you your rightful place in the great order of the universe around; to fill you with a continuous purpose and with a continuous will to do it? Have you never had a dream of an Inspirer? — a spirit of all spirits?"

Lancelot turned away with a shudder.

"Talk of anything but that! Little you know — and yet you seem to know everything — the agony of craving with which I have longed for guidance; the rage and disgust which possessed me when I tried one pretended teacher after another, and found in myself depths which their spirits could not, or rather would not, touch. I have been irreverent to the false, from very longing to worship the true; I have been a rebel to sham leaders, for very desire to be loyal to a real one; I have envied my poor cousin his Jesuits; I have envied my own pointers their slavery to my whip and whistle; I have fled, as a last resource, to brandy and opium, for the inspiration which neither man nor demon would bestow. . . . Then I found . . . you know my story. . . . And when I looked to her to guide and inspire me, behold! I found myself, by the very laws of humanity, compelled to guide and inspire her; — blind, to lead the blind! — Thank God, for her sake, that she was taken from me!"

"Did you ever mistake these substitutes, even the noblest of them, for the reality! Did not your very dissatisfaction with them show you that the true inspirer ought to be, if he were to satisfy your cravings, a person, truly — else how could he inspire and teach you, a person yourself! — but an utterly infinite, omniscient, eternal person? How know you that in that dream He was not unveiling Himself to you — He, The Spirit, who is the Lord and Giver of Life; The Spirit, who teaches men their duty and relation to those above, around, beneath them; the Spirit of order, obedience, loyalty, brotherhood, mercy, condescension?"

"But I never could distinguish these dreams from each other; the moment that I essayed to separate them, I seemed to break up the thought of an absolute one ground of all things, without which the universe would have seemed a piecemeal chaos; and they receded to infinite distance, and became transparent, barren, notional shadows of my own brain, even as your words are now."

"How know you that you were meant to distinguish them? How know you that that very impossibility was not the testimony of fact and experience to that old Catholic dogma, for the sake of which you just now shrank from my teaching? I say that this is so. How do you know that it is not?"

"But how do I know that it is? I want proof."

"And you are the man who was, five minutes ago, crying out for practical facts, and disdaining cold abstract necessities of logic! Can you prove that your body exists?"

"No."

"Can you prove that your spirit exists?"

"No."

"And yet know that they both exist. And how?"

"*Solvitur ambulando.*"

"Exactly. When you try to prove either of them without the other, you fail. You arrive, if at anything, at some barren polar notion. By action alone you prove the mesothetic fact which underlies and unites them."

"*Quorsum hæc?*"

"Hither. I am not going to demonstrate the indemonstrable — to give you intellectual notions

which, after all, will be but reflexes of my own peculiar brain, and so add the green of my spectacles to the orange of yours, and make night hideous by fresh monsters. I may help you to think yourself into a theoretical Tritheism, or a theoretical Sabellianism; I cannot make you think yourself into practical and living Catholicism. As you of anthropology, so I say of theology, — *Solvitur ambulando.* Don't believe Catholic doctrine unless you like; faith is free. But see if you can reclaim either society or yourself without it; see if He will let you reclaim them. Take Catholic doctrine for granted; act on it; and see if you will not reclaim them!"

"Take for granted? Am I to come, after all, to implicit faith?"

"Implicit fiddlesticks! Did you ever read the Novum Organum? Mellot told me that you were a geologist."

"Well?"

"You took for granted what you read in geological books, and went to the mine and the quarry afterwards, to verify it in practice; and according as you found fact correspond to theory, you retained or rejected. Was that implicit faith, or common sense, common humility, and sound induction?"

"Sound induction, at least."

"Then go now, and do likewise. Believe that the learned, wise, and good, for 1800 years, may possibly have found out somewhat, or have been taught somewhat, on this matter, and test their theory by practice. If a theory on such a point is worth anything at all, it is omnipotent and all-explaining. If it will not work, of course there

is no use keeping it a moment. Perhaps it will work. I say it will."

"But I shall not work it; I still dread my own spectacles. I dare not trust myself alone to verify a theory of Murchison's or Lyell's. How dare I trust myself in this?"

"Then do not trust yourself alone: come and see what others are doing. Come, and become a member of a body which is verifying, by united action, those universal and eternal truths, which are too great for the grasp of any one time-ridden individual. Not that we claim the gift of infallibility, any more than I do that of perfect utterance of the little which we do know."

"Then what do you promise me in asking me to go with you?"

"Practical proof that these my words are true, — practical proof that they can make a nation all that England might be and is not, — the sight of what a people might become who, knowing thus far, do what they know. We believe no more than you, but we believe it. Come and see! — and yet you will not see; facts, and the reasons of them, will be as impalpable to you there as here, unless you can again obey your Novum Organum."

"How then?"

"By renouncing all your idols — the idols of the race and of the market, of the study and of the theatre. Every national prejudice, every vulgar superstition, every remnant of pedantic system, every sentimental like or dislike, must be left behind you, for the induction of the world problem. You must empty yourself before God will fill you."

"Of what can I strip myself more? I know nothing; I can do nothing; I hope nothing; I fear nothing; I am nothing."

"And you would gain something. But for what purpose? — for on that depends your whole success. To be famous, great, glorious, powerful, beneficent?"

"As I live, the height of my ambition, small though it be, is only to find my place, though it were but as a sweeper of chimneys. If I dare wish — if I dare choose, it would be only this — to regenerate one little parish in the whole world. . . . To do that, and die, for aught I care, without ever being recognized as the author of my own deeds . . . to hear them, if need be, imputed to another, and myself accursed as a fool, if I can but atone for the sins of . . . "

He paused; but his teacher understood him.

"It is enough," he said. "Come with me; Tregarva waits for us near. Again I warn you; you will hear nothing new; you shall only see what you, and all around you, have known and not done, known and done. We have no peculiar doctrines or systems; the old creeds are enough for us. But we have obeyed the teaching which we received in each and every age, and allowed ourselves to be built up, generation by generation — as the rest of Christendom might have done — into a living temple, on the foundation which is laid already, and other than which no man can lay."

"And what is that?"

"Jesus Christ — THE MAN."

He took Lancelot by the hand. A peaceful

warmth diffused itself over his limbs; the droning of the organ sounded fainter and more faint; the marble monuments grew dim and distant; and, half unconsciously, he followed like a child through the cathedral door.

* * * * * * *

EPILOGUE

I CAN foresee many criticisms, and those not unreasonable ones, on this little book — let it be some excuse at least for me, that I have foreseen them. Readers will complain, I doubt not, of the very mythical and mysterious *dénouement* of a story which began by things so gross and palpable as field-sports and pauperism. But is it not true that, sooner or later, "*omnia exeunt in mysterium*"? Out of mystery we all came at our birth, fox-hunters and paupers, sages and saints; into mystery we shall all return . . . at all events, when we die; probably, as it seems to me, some of us will return thither before we die. For if the signs of the times mean anything, they portend, I humbly submit, a somewhat mysterious and mythical *dénouement* to this very age, and to those struggles of it which I have herein attempted, clumsily enough, to sketch. We are entering fast, I both hope and fear, into the region of prodigy, true and false; and our great-grandchildren will look back on the latter half of this century, and ask if it were possible that such things could happen in an organized planet? The Benthamites will receive this announcement, if it ever meets their eyes, with shouts of laughter. Be it so . . . *nous verrons*. . . . In the year 1847, if they will

recollect, they were congratulating themselves on the nations having grown too wise to go to war any more . . . and in 1848? So it has been from the beginning. What did philosophers expect in 1792? What did they see in 1793? Popery was to be eternal; but the Reformation came nevertheless. Rome was to be eternal; but Alaric came. Jerusalem was to be eternal; but Titus came. Gomorrha was to be eternal, I doubt not; but the fire-floods came. . . . "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; and the flood came and swept them all away." Of course they did not expect it. They went on saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning." Most true; but what if they were from the beginning — over a volcano's mouth? What if the method whereon things have proceeded since the creation were, as geology as well as history proclaims, a *cataclysmic* method? What then? Why should not this age, as all others like it have done, end in a cataclysm, and a prodigy, and a mystery? And why should not my little book do likewise?

Again — Readers will probably complain of the fragmentary and unconnected form of the book. Let them first be sure that that is not an integral feature of the subject itself, and therefore the very form the book should take. Do not young men think, speak, act, just now, in this very incoherent, fragmentary way; without methodic education or habits of thought; with the various stereotyped systems which they have

received by tradition, breaking up under them like ice in a thaw; with a thousand facts and notions, which they know not how to classify, pouring in on them like a flood? — a very Yeasty state of mind altogether, like a mountain burn in a spring rain, carrying down with it stones, sticks, peat-water, addle grouse-eggs and drowned kingfishers, fertilizing salts and vegetable poisons — not, alas! without a large crust, here and there, of sheer froth. Yet no heterogeneous confused flood-deposit, no fertile meadows below. And no high water, no fishing. It is in the long black droughts, when the water is foul from lowness, and not from height, that Hydras and Desmidiæ, and Rotifers, and all uncouth pseud-organisms, bred of putridity, begin to multiply, and the fish are sick for want of a fresh, and the cunningest artificial fly is of no avail, and the shrewdest angler will do nothing — except with a gross fleshly gilt-tailed worm, or the cannibal bait of roe, whereby parent fishes, like competitive barbarisms, devour each other's flesh and blood — perhaps their own. It is when the stream is clearing after a flood, that the fish will rise. . . . When will the flood clear, and the fish come on the feed again?

Next; I shall be blamed for having left untold the fate of those characters who have acted throughout as Lancelot's satellites. But indeed their only purpose consisted in their influence on his development, and that of Tregarva; I do not see that we have any need to follow them farther. The reader can surely conjecture their history for himself. . . . He may be pretty certain that they have gone the way of the world

. . . *abierunt ad plures* . . . for this life or for the next. They have done — very much what he or I might have done in their place — nothing. Nature brings very few of her children to perfection, in these days or any other. . . . And for Grace, which does bring its children to perfection, the quantity and quality of the perfection must depend on the quantity and quality of the grace, and that again, to an awful extent — The Giver only knows to how great an extent — on the will of the recipients, and therefore in exact proportion to their lowness in the human scale, on the circumstances which environ them. So my characters are now — very much what the reader might expect them to be. I confess them to be unsatisfactory; so are most things; but how can I solve problems which fact has not yet solved for me? How am I to extricate my antitypal characters, when their living types have not yet extricated themselves? When the age moves on, my story shall move on with it. Let it be enough, that my puppets have retreated in good order, and that I am willing to give to those readers who have conceived something of human interest for them, the latest accounts of their doings.

With the exception, that is, of Mellot and Sabina. Them I confess to be an utterly mysterious, fragmentary little couple. Why not? Do you not meet with twenty such in the course of your life? — Charming people, who for aught you know may be opera folk from Paris, or emissaries from the Czar, or disguised Jesuits, or disguised Angels . . . who evidently "have a history," and a strange one, which you never expect or

attempt to fathom; who interest you intensely for a while, and then are whirled away again in the great world-waltz, and lost in the crowd forever? Why should you wish my story to be more complete than theirs is, or less romantic than theirs may be? There are more things in London, as well as in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in our philosophy. If you but knew the secret history of that dull gentleman opposite whom you sat at dinner yesterday! — the real thoughts of that chattering girl whom you took down! — "*Omnia exeunt in mysterium,*" I say again. Every human being is a romance, a miracle to himself now; and will appear as one to all the world in That Day.

But now for the rest; and Squire Lavington first. He is a very fair sample of the fate of the British public; for he is dead and buried: and readers would not have me extricate him out of that situation. If you ask news of the reason and manner of his end, I can only answer that, like many others, he went out — as candles do. I believe he expressed general repentance for all his sins — all, at least, of which he was aware. To confess and repent of the state of the Whitford Priors estate, and of the poor thereon, was of course more than any minister, of any denomination whatsoever, could be required to demand of him; seeing that would have involved a recognition of those duties of property, of which the good old gentleman was to the last a stanch denier; and which are as yet seldom supposed to be included in any Christian creed, Catholic or other. Two sermons were preached in Whitford on the day of his funeral; one by Mr.

O'Blareaway, on the text from Job, provided for such occasions — "When the ear heard him, then it blessed him," etc. etc.; the other by the Baptist preacher, on two verses of the forty-ninth Psalm —

"They fancy that their houses shall endure forever, and call the lands after their own names.

"Yet man being in honor hath no understanding, but is compared to the beasts that perish."

Waiving the good taste, which was probably on a par in both cases, the reader is left to decide which of the two texts was most applicable.

Mrs. Lavington is Mrs. Lavington no longer. She has married, to the astonishment of the world in general, that "excellent man," Mr. O'Blareaway, who has been discovered not to be quite as young as he appeared, his graces being principally owing to a Brutus wig, which he has now wisely discarded. Mrs. Lavington now sits in state under her husband's ministry, as the leader of the religious world in the fashionable watering-place of Steamingbath, and derives her notions of the past, present, and future state of the universe principally from those two meek and unbiassed periodicals, the "Protestant Hue-and-Cry" and the "Christian Satirist" to both of which O'Blareaway is a constant contributor. She has taken such an aversion to Whitford since Argemone's death, that she has ceased to have any connection with that unhealthy locality, beyond the popular and easy one of rent-receiving. O'Blareaway has never entered the parish to his knowledge since Mr. Lavington's funeral; and was much pleased, the last time I rode with him, at my informing him that a

certain picturesque moorland which he had been greatly admiring, was his own possession. . . . After all, he is "an excellent man;" and when I met a large party at his house the other day, and beheld dory and surmullet, champagne and lachryma Christi, amid all the glory of the Whitford plate . . . (some of it said to have belonged to the altar of the Priory Church four hundred years ago), I was deeply moved by the impressive tone in which, at the end of a long grace, he prayed "that the daily bread of our less favored brethren might be mercifully vouchsafed to them." . . . My dear readers, would you have me, even if I could, extricate him from such an Elysium by any *dénouement* whatsoever?

Poor dear Luke, again, is said to be painting lean frescos for the Something-or-other-Kirche at Munich; and the vicar, under the name of Father Stylites, of the order of St. Philumena, is preaching impassioned sermons to crowded congregations at St. George's, Bedlam. How can I extricate them from that? No one has come forth of it yet, to my knowledge, except by paths whereof I shall use Lessing's saying, "I may have my whole hand full of truth, and yet find good to open only my little finger." But who cares for their coming out? They are but two more added to the five hundred, at whose moral suicide, and dive into the Roman Avernus, a quasi-Protestant public looks on with a sort of savage satisfaction, crying only, "Did n't we tell you so?"—and more than half hopes that they will not come back again, lest they should be discovered to have learnt anything while they were there. What are two among that five hundred? much more among the five

thousand who seem destined shortly to follow them?

The banker, thanks to Barnakill's assistance, is rapidly getting rich again — who would wish to stop him? However, he is wiser, on some points at least, than he was of yore. He has taken up the flax movement violently of late — perhaps owing to some hint of Barnakill's — talks of nothing but Chevalier Claussen and Mr. Donellan, and is very anxious to advance capital to any landlord who will grow flax on Mr. Warnes's method, either in England or Ireland. . . . John Bull, however, has not yet awakened sufficiently to listen to his overtures, but sits up in bed, dolefully rubbing his eyes, and bemoaning the evanishment of his protectionist dream — altogether realizing tolerably, he and his land, Dr. Watts' well-known moral song concerning the sluggard and his garden.

Lord Minchampstead again prospers. Either the nuns of Minchampstead have left no Nemesis behind them, like those of Whitford, or a certain wisdom and righteousness of his, however dim and imperfect, averts it for a time. So, as I said, he prospers, and is hated; especially by his farmers, to whom he has just offered long leases, and a sliding corn-rent. They would have hated him just the same if he had kept them at rack-rents; and he has not forgotten that; but they have. They looked shy at the leases, because they bind them to farm high, which they do not know how to do; and at the corn-rent, because they think that he expects wheat to rise again — which, being a sensible man, he very probably does. But for my story — I certainly do not see how to extricate him or any one else from farmers' stupidity,

greed, and ill-will. . . . That question must have seven years' more free-trade to settle it, before I can say anything thereon. Still less can I foreshadow the fate of his eldest son, who has just been rusticated from Christ Church for riding one of Simmon's hacks through a china-shop window; especially as the youth is reported to be given to piquette and strong liquors, and, like many noblemen's eldest sons, is considered "not to have the talent of his father." As for the old lord himself, I have no wish to change or develop him in any way — except to cut slips off him, as you do off a willow, and plant two or three in every county in England. Let him alone to work out his own plot . . . we have not seen the end of it yet; but whatever it will be, England has need of him as a transition-stage between feudalism and * * * *, for many a day to come. If he be not the ideal landlord, he is nearer it than any we are like yet to see. . . .

Except one; and that, after all, is Lord Vieuxbois. Let him go on, like a gallant gentleman as he is, and prosper. And he will prosper, for he fears God, and God is with him. He has much to learn; and a little to unlearn. He has to learn that God is a living God now, as well as in the middle ages; to learn to trust not in antique precedents, but in eternal laws: to learn that his tenants, just because they are children of God, are not to be kept children, but developed and educated into sons; to learn that God's grace, like His love, is free, and that His spirit bloweth where it listeth, and vindicates its own free-will against our narrow systems, by revealing, at times, even to nominal Heretics and Infidels, truths which the

Catholic Church must humbly receive, as the message of Him who is wider, deeper, more tolerant, than even she can be. . . . And he is in the way to learn all this. Let him go on. At what conclusions he will attain, he knows not, nor do I. But this I know, that he is on the path to great and true conclusions. . . . And he is just about to be married, too. That surely should teach him something. The papers inform me that his bride elect is Lord Minchampstead's youngest daughter. That should be a noble mixture; there should be stalwart offspring, spiritual as well as physical, born of that intermarriage of the old and the new. We will hope it: perhaps some of my readers, who enter into my inner meaning, may also pray for it.

Whom have I to account for besides? Crawy — though some of my readers may consider the mention of him superfluous. But to those who do not, I may impart the news, that last month, in the union workhouse — he died; and may, for aught we know, have ere this met Squire Lavington. . . . He is supposed, or at least said, to have had a soul to be saved . . . as I think, a body to be saved also. But what is one more among so many? And in an over-peopled country like this, too. . . . One must learn to look at things — and paupers — in the mass.

The poor of Whitford also? My dear readers, I trust you will not ask me just now to draw the horoscope of the Whitford poor, or of any others. Really that depends principally on yourselves. . . . But for the present, the poor of Whitford, owing, as it seems to them and me, to quite other causes than an "overstocked labor-market," or too rapid

"multiplication of their species," are growing more profligate, reckless, pauperized, year by year. O'Blareaway complained sadly to me the other day that the poor-rates were becoming "heavier and heavier" — had nearly reached, indeed, what they were under the old law. . . .

But there is one who does not complain, but gives and gives, and stints herself to give, and weeps in silence and unseen over the evils which she has yearly less and less power to stem.

For in a darkened chamber of the fine house at Steamingbath, lies on a sofa Honoria Lavington — beautiful no more; the victim of some mysterious and agonizing disease, about which the physicians agree on one point only — that it is hopeless. The "curse of the Lavingtons" is on her; and she bears it. There she lies, and prays, and reads, and arranges her charities, and writes little books for children, full of the Beloved Name which is forever on her lips. She suffers — none but herself knows how much, or how strangely — yet she is never heard to sigh. She weeps in secret — she has long ceased to plead — for others, not for herself; and prays for them too — perhaps some day her prayers will yet be answered. But she greets all visitors with a smile fresh from heaven; and all who enter that room leave it saddened, and yet happy, like those who have lingered a moment at the gates of paradise, and seen angels ascending and descending upon earth. There she lies — who could wish her otherwise? Even Doctor Autotheus Maresnest, the celebrated mesmerizer, who, though he laughs at the Resurrection of the Lord, is confidently reported to have raised more than one

corpse to life himself, was heard to say, after having attended her professionally, that her waking bliss and peace, although unfortunately unattributable even to autocatalepsy, much less to somnambulist exaltation, was, on the whole, however unscientific, almost as enviable.

There she lies — and will lie till she dies — the type of thousands more, "the martyrs by the pang without the palm," who find no mates in this life . . . and yet may find them in the life to come. . . . Poor Paul Tregarva! Little he fancies how her days run by! . . .

At least, there has been no news since that last scene in St. Paul's Cathedral, either of him or Lancelot. How their strange teacher has fulfilled his promise of guiding their education; whether they have yet reached the country of Prester John; whether, indeed, that Caucasian Utopia has a local and bodily existence, or was only used by Barnakill to shadow out that Ideal which is, as he said of the Garden of Eden, always near us, underlying the Actual, as the spirit does its body, exhibiting itself step by step through all the falsehoods and confusions of history and society, giving life to all in it which is not falsehood and decay; on all these questions I can give my readers no sort of answer; perhaps I may as yet have no answer to give; perhaps I may be afraid of giving one; perhaps the times themselves are giving, at once cheerfully and sadly, in strange destructions and strange births, a better answer than I can give. I have set forth, as far as in me lay, the data of my problem: and surely, if the premises be given, wise men will not have to look far for the conclusion. In homely English I have given my readers Yeast; if they be

what I take them for, they will be able to bake with it themselves.

And yet I have brought Lancelot, at least — perhaps Tregarva too — to a conclusion, and an all-important one, which whoso reads may find fairly printed in these pages. Henceforth his life must begin anew. Were I to carry on the thread of his story continuously, he would still seem to have overleaped as vast a gulf as if I had re-introduced him as a gray-haired man. Strange! that the death of one of the lovers should seem no complete termination to their history, when their marriage would have been accepted by all as the legitimate *dénouement*, beyond which no information was to be expected. As if the history of love always ended at the altar! Oftener it only begins there; and all before it is but a mere longing to love. Why should readers complain of being refused the future history of one life, when they are in most novels cut short by the marriage *finale* from the biography of two?

But if, over and above this, any reader should be wroth at my having left Lancelot's history unfinished on questions in his opinion more important than that of love, let me entreat him to set manfully about finishing his own history — a far more important one to him than Lancelot's. If he shall complain that doubts are raised for which no solution is given, that my hero is brought into contradictory beliefs without present means of bringing them to accord, into passive acquiescence in vast truths without seeing any possibility of practically applying them — let him consider well whether such be not his own case; let him, if he be as most are, thank God when he finds out

that such is his case, when he knows at last that those are most blind who say they see, when he becomes at last conscious how little he believes, how little he acts up to that small belief. Let him try to right somewhat of the doubt, confusion, custom-worship, inconsistency, idolatry, within him — some of the greed, bigotry, recklessness, respectably superstitious atheism around him? and perhaps before his new task is finished, Lancelot and Tregarva may have returned with a message, if not for him — for that depends upon his having ears to hear it — yet possibly for strong Lord Minchampstead, probably for good Lord Vieuxbois, and surely for the sinners and the slaves of Whitford Priors. What it will be, I know not altogether; but this I know, that if my heroes go on as they have set forth, looking with single mind for some one ground of human light and love, some everlasting rock whereon to build, utterly careless what the building may be, howsoever contrary to precedent and prejudice, and the idols of the day, provided God, and nature, and the accumulated lessons of all the ages, help them in its construction — then they will find in time the thing they seek, and see how the will of God may at last be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven. But, alas! between them and it are waste raging waters, foul mud banks, thick with dragons and sirens; and many a bitter day and blinding night, in cold and hunger, spiritual and perhaps physical, await them. For it was a true vision which John Bunyan saw, and one which, as the visions of wise men are wont to do, meant far more than the seer fancied, when he beheld in his dream that there was indeed a land of Beulah, and Arcadian Shepherd Paradise,

on whose mountain tops the everlasting sunshine lay; but that the way to it, as these last three years are preaching to us, went past the mouth of Hell, and through the valley of the Shadow of Death.

THE END

TO MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

THIS edition of Charles Kingsley's collected poetical works is the first to give correctly the year when each was written or published. The dates are taken from a copy annotated by the poet's wife. The term poet is used with a certain degree of hesitation, as the contents of this small volume hardly warrant enrolling the author among the greater bards of the Victorian era. Yet not only here, but in his prose works, we have to acknowledge that he possessed the instinct of a poet in a very high degree. In his fiction, unconsciously to himself it would seem, we often find him bursting into language belonging to the poet rather than to the novelist, scientist, or preacher. And this also constituted his special charm to every one that heard him speak. Indeed, the object of his own life might be summed up in the quatrain, written to one very near and dear to him:

> "Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
> Do noble things, not dream them, all day long;
> And so make life, death, and that vast For Ever,
> One grand, sweet song."

Despite trials and disappointments, and hard, thankless work for the welfare of others, Charles

Kingsley truly made the life he lived, the life he tried to teach his fellow-men, "one grand, sweet song."

In his command of language, — coupled with a varied knowledge of things animate and inanimate, of countries in their past and present condition, surpassing most men, — in his love of the artistic and the beautiful, he had all the requisites of a great poet. Nevertheless, he wrote to a friend in 1855: "No more poetry for me. I can do my mission better, I find, by the novel." Yet, in his own heart, Kingsley always hoped that a time might come when he would have leisure to devote to verse. But it was not to be.

His most important poetical work is "The Saint's Tragedy," the life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, — begun as prose in 1842, finally taking the form of drama and appearing under the well-known title in 1847.

The painful story is entirely authentic. As the opinion of one of the best literary critics in Europe at the time it appeared is given in the Memories, Volume I., it is needless to say more here than that it became more widely known and appreciated in Germany than in England, although its power and worth were thoroughly recognized by discerning Englishmen. We will therefore pass to the poem next in importance, the beautiful Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda, done into English hexameter verse. Those who have read "Westward Ho!" may remember

the introduction of a supposed conversation in Ireland between Sir Walter Raleigh and the author of the Faerie Queene on English verse and especially on hexameters, which were then the vogue, — in which the difficulties of English hexameters are clearly set forth. Since that day many poets have tried; but no one has yet succeeded in producing the roll of Homer's verse in our language; and, for a sustained effort, it is a question whether Andromeda is not one of the least imperfect among the many. Of course it has the advantage of a classic subject; but there is a swing and a grandeur in many of the lines, which show them to be worthy of the theme.

"The Saint's Tragedy" and "Andromeda" were Charles Kingsley's only serious attempts at poetry, — indeed, the only poems he ever wrote fair copies of; all the rest of the songs, ballads, sonnets, etc., contained in these volumes, bubbled up out of his heart spontaneously, especially during or after some great mental stress. Therefore, in most of them may be found a vein of sadness, intensified during the later years of his life.

Once in a while something would stir his blood, and he would chant a ballad of doughty deeds, as in "The Knight's Leap," "The Little Baltung," and "The Last Buccaneer." But surely, the "Mango Tree," written in 1870, is as tragically pathetic as the better known "Sands of Dee" and the "Three Fishers," of twenty years earlier.

This sadness culminated in his last poem,

Lorraine, written when desperately ill at Colorado Springs in 1874. Whether the story is authentic or imaginary is unknown. The meaning of the refrain, "Barum, Barum, Baree," is also unknown.

To a certain extent it corresponds to the hoof-beats of a galloping horse: but the termination "Baree" indicates that the horse is stopped suddenly in his gallop. Possibly, however, the key lies in the word "Barum," which, by the common interchange of "W" and "B" would become the German word *warum*, "why." —

Why should Lorraine be forced

"To ride Vindictive, with this baby on my knee"?

Why should the brute kill her

"At the brook against a pollard willow tree"?

Why should

"No one but the baby cry for poor
Lorraine Lorree"?

"It's a mad world, my masters," was a favorite expression of Charles Kingsley's, and it may be, while "he lay a-thinking" over its many madnesses, this long forgotten tale of misery welled up in his brain, and he cried, "Why? — Why should such things be?"

M. K.

INTRODUCTORY

THE story which I have here put into a dramatic form is one familiar to Romanists, and perfectly and circumstantially authenticated. Abridged versions of it, carefully softened and sentimentalized, may be read in any Romish collection of Lives of the Saints. An enlarged edition has been published in France, I believe by Count Montalembert, and translated, with illustrations, by an English gentleman, which admits certain miraculous legends, of later date, and, like other prodigies, worthless to the student of human character. From consulting this work I have hitherto abstained, in order that I might draw my facts and opinions, entire and unbiassed, from the original Biography of Elizabeth, by Dietrich of Appold, her contemporary, as given entire by Canisius.

Dietrich was born in Thuringia, near the scene of Elizabeth's labors, a few years before her death; had conversed with those who had seen her, and calls to witness "God and the elect angels," that he had inserted nothing but what he had either understood from religious and veracious persons, or read in approved writings, viz. "*The Book of the Sayings of Elizabeth's Four Ladies* (*Guta, Isentrudis,*

and two others)"; "*The Letter which Conrad of Marpurg, her Director, wrote to Pope Gregory the Ninth*" (these two documents still exist); "*The Sermon of Otto*" (*de Ordine Prædic.*), which begins thus: "*Mulierem fortem.*"

"Not satisfied with these," he "visited monasteries, castles, and towns, interrogated the most aged and veracious persons, and wrote letters, seeking for completeness and truth in all things;" and thus composed his biography, from which that in Surius (*Acta Sanctorum*), Jacobus de Voragine, Alban Butler, and all others which I have seen, are copied with a very few additions and many prudent omissions.

Wishing to adhere strictly to historical truth, I have followed the received account, not only in the incidents, but often in the language which it attributes to its various characters; and have given in the Notes all necessary references to the biography in Canisius' collection. My part has therefore been merely to show how the conduct of my heroine was not only possible, but to a certain degree necessary, for a character of earnestness and piety such as hers, working under the influences of the Middle Age.

In deducing fairly, from the phenomena of her life, the character of Elizabeth, she necessarily became a type of two great mental struggles of the Middle Age; first, of that between Scriptural or unconscious, and popish or conscious, purity: in a word, between innocence and prudery; next, of the struggle between healthy human affection, and

the Manichean contempt with which a celibate clergy would have all men regard the names of husband, wife, and parent. To exhibit this latter falsehood in its miserable consequences, when received into a heart of insight and determination sufficient to follow out all belief to its ultimate practice, is the main object of my Poem. That a most degrading and agonizing contradiction on these points must have existed in the mind of Elizabeth, and of all who with similar characters shall have found themselves under similar influences, is a necessity that must be evident to all who know anything of the deeper affections of men. In the idea of a married Romish saint, these miseries should follow logically from the Romish view of human relations. In Elizabeth's case their existence is proved equally logically from the acknowledged facts of her conduct.

I may here observe, that if I have in no case made her allude to the Virgin Mary, and exhibited the sense of infinite duty and loyalty to Christ alone, as the mainspring of all her noblest deeds, it is merely in accordance with Dietrich's biography. The omission of all Mariolatry is remarkable. My business is to copy that omission, as I should in the opposite case have copied the introduction of Virgin-worship into the original tale. The business of those who make Mary, to women especially, the complete substitute for the Saviour — I had almost said, for all Three Persons of the Trinity — is to explain, if they can, her non-appearance in this case.

Lewis, again, I have drawn as I found him, possessed of all virtues but those of action; in knowledge, in moral courage, in spiritual attainment, infinitely inferior to his wife, and depending on her to be taught to pray; giving her higher faculties nothing to rest on in himself, and leaving the noblest offices of a husband to be supplied by a spiritual director. He thus becomes a type of the husbands of the Middle Age, and of the woman-worship of chivalry. Woman-worship, "the honor due to the weaker vessel," is indeed of God, and woe to the nation and to the man in whom it dies. But in the Middle Age, this feeling had no religious root, by which it could connect itself rationally, either with actual wedlock or with the noble yearnings of men's spirits, and it therefore could not but die down into a semi-sensual dream of female-saint-worship, or fantastic idolatry of mere physical beauty, leaving the women themselves an easy prey to the intellectual allurements of the more educated and subtle priesthood.

In Conrad's case, again, I have fancied that I discover in the various notices of his life a noble nature warped and blinded by its unnatural exclusions from those family ties through which we first discern or describe God and our relations to Him, and forced to concentrate his whole faculties in the service, not so much of a God of Truth as of a Catholic system. In his character will be found, I hope, some implicit apology for the failings of such truly great men as Dunstan, Becket, and Dominic, and of many more whom, if we hate,

we shall never understand, while we shall be but too likely, in our own way, to copy them.

Walter of Varila, a more fictitious character, represents the "healthy animalism" of the Teutonic mind, with its mixture of deep earnestness and hearty merriment. His dislike of priestly sentimentalities is no anachronism. Even in his day, a noble lay-religion, founded on faith in the divine and universal symbolism of humanity and nature, was gradually arising, and venting itself, from time to time, as I conceive, through many most unsuspected channels, through chivalry, through the minnesingers, through the lay inventors, or rather importers, of pointed architecture, through the German school of painting, through the politics of the free towns, till it attained complete freedom in Luther and his associate reformers.

For my fantastic quotations of Scripture, if they shall be deemed irreverent, I can only say, that they were the fashion of the time, from prince to peasant — that there is scarcely one of them with which I have not actually met in the writings of the period — that those writings abound with misuse of Scripture, far more coarse, arbitrary, and ridiculous, than any which I have dared to insert — that I had no right to omit so radical a characteristic of the Middle Age.

For the more coarse and homely passages with which the drama is interspersed, I must make the same apology. I put them there because they were there — because the Middle Age was, in the gross, a coarse, barbarous, and profligate age —

because it was necessary, in order to bring out fairly the beauty of the central character, to show "the crooked and perverse generation" in which she was "a child of God without rebuke." It was, in fact, the very ferocity and foulness of the time which, by a natural revulsion, called forth at the same time the Apostolic holiness and the Manichean asceticism of the Mediæval Saints. The world was so bad that, to be Saints at all, they were compelled to go out of the world. It was necessary, moreover, in depicting the poor man's patroness, to show the material on which she worked; and those who know the poor, know also that we can no more judge truly of their characters in the presence of their benefactors, than we can tell by seeing clay in the potter's hands what it was in its native pit. These scenes have, therefore, been laid principally in Elizabeth's absence, in order to preserve their only use and meaning.

So rough and common a life-picture of the Middle Age will, I am afraid, whether faithful or not, be far from acceptable to those who take their notions of that period principally from such exquisite dreams as the fictions of Fouqué, and of certain moderns whose graceful minds, like some enchanted well,

> In whose calm depths the pure and beautiful
> Alone are mirrored,

are, on account of their very sweetness and simplicity, singularly unfitted to convey any true like-

ness of the coarse and stormy Middle Age. I have been already accused, by others than Romanists, of profaning this whole subject — *i.e.* of telling the whole truth, pleasant or not, about it. But really, time enough has been lost in ignorant abuse of that period, and time enough also, lately, in blind adoration of it. When shall we learn to see it as it was? — the dawning manhood of Europe — rich with all the tenderness, the simplicity, the enthusiasm of youth — but also darkened, alas! with its full share of youth's precipitance and extravagance, fierce passions and blind self-will — its virtues and its vices colossal, and, for that very reason, always haunted by the twin-imp of the colossal — the caricatured.

Lastly, the many miraculous stories which the biographer of Elizabeth relates of her I had no right, for the sake of truth, to interweave in the plot, while it was necessary to indicate at least their existence. I have, therefore, put such of them as seemed least absurd into the mouth of Conrad, to whom, in fact, they owe their original publication, and have done so, as I hope, not without a just ethical purpose.

Such was my idea: of the inconsistencies and shortcomings of this its realization, no one can ever be so painfully sensible as I am already myself. If, however, this book shall cause one Englishman honestly to ask himself, "I, as a Protestant, have been accustomed to assert the purity and dignity of the offices of husband, wife, and parent. Have I ever examined the grounds

of my own assertion? Do I believe them to be as callings from God, spiritual, sacramental, divine, eternal? Or am I at heart regarding and using them, like the Papist, merely as heaven's indulgences to the infirmities of fallen man?" — then will my book have done its work.

If, again, it shall deter one young man from the example of those miserable dilettanti, who in books and sermons are whimpering meagre second-hand praises of celibacy — depreciating as carnal and degrading those family ties to which they owe their own existence, and in the enjoyment of which they themselves all the while unblushingly indulge — insulting thus their own wives and mothers — nibbling ignorantly at the very root of that household purity which constitutes the distinctive superiority of Protestant over Popish nations — again my book will have done its work.

If, lastly, it shall awaken one pious Protestant to recognize, in some, at least, of the Saints of the Middle Age, beings not only of the same passions, but of the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, as themselves, *Protestants*, not the less deep and true, because utterly unconscious and practical — mighty witnesses against the two antichrists of their age — the tyranny of feudal caste, and the phantoms which Popery substitutes for the living Christ — then also will my little book indeed have done its work.

C. K.

1848.

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POEMS

CHARACTERS

ELIZABETH, *daughter of the King of Hungary.*
LEWIS, *Landgrave of Thuringia, betrothed to her in childhood.*
HENRY, *brother of Lewis.*
WALTER *of Varila,*
RUDOLF *the Cupbearer,*
LEUTOLF *of Erlstetten,*
HARTWIG *of Erba,*
COUNT HUGO,
COUNT OF SAYM, etc.
} *Vassals of Lewis.*
CONRAD *of Marpurg, a Monk, the Pope's Commissioner for the suppression of heresy.*
GERARD, *his Chaplain.*
BISHOP OF BAMBERG, *uncle of Elizabeth, etc. etc.*
SOPHIA, *Dowager Landgravine.*
AGNES, *her daughter, sister of Lewis.*
ISENTRUDIS, *Elizabeth's nurse.*
GUTA, *her favorite maiden.*

Etc. etc. etc.

The Scene lies principally in Eisenach, and the Wartburg; changing afterwards to Bamberg, and finally to Marpurg.

PROEM

(Epimetheus)

I

Wake again, Teutonic Father-ages,
  Speak again, beloved primæval creeds;
Flash ancestral spirit from your pages,
  Wake the greedy age to noble deeds.

II

Tell us, how of old our saintly mothers
  Schooled themselves by vigil, fast, and prayer;
Learnt to love as Jesus loved before them,
  While they bore the cross which poor men bear.

III

Tell us how our stout crusading fathers
  Fought and died for God, and not for gold;
Let their love, their faith, their boyish daring,
  Distance-mellowed, gild the days of old.

IV

Tell us how the sexless workers, thronging,
  Angel-tended, round the convent doors,
Wrought to Christian faith and holy order
  Savage hearts alike and barren moors.

V

Ye who built the churches where we worship,
  Ye who framed the laws by which we move,
Fathers, long belied, and long forsaken,
  Oh! forgive the children of your love!

(Prometheus)

I

Speak! but ask us not to be as ye were!
  All but God is changing day by day.
He who breathes on man the plastic spirit
  Bids us mould ourselves its robe of clay.

II

Old anarchic floods of revolution,
  Drowning ill and good alike in night,
Sink, and bare the wrecks of ancient labor,
  Fossil-teeming, to the searching light.

III

There will we find laws, which shall interpret,
  Through the simpler past, existing life;
Delving up from mines and fairy caverns
  Charmed blades, to cut the age's strife.

IV

What though fogs may stream from draining waters?
  We will till the clays to mellow loam;
Wake the graveyard of our fathers' spirits;
  Clothe its crumbling mounds with blade and bloom.

V

Old decays but foster new creations;
  Bones and ashes feed the golden corn;
Fresh elixirs wander every moment,
  Down the veins through which the live past feeds its child, the live unborn.

THE SAINT'S TRAGEDY

ACT I

SCENE I. A.D. 1220

The Doorway of a closed Chapel in the Wartburg.
ELIZABETH *sitting on the Steps.*

Eliz. BABY JESUS, who dost lie
Far above that stormy sky,
In Thy mother's pure caress,
Stoop and save the motherless.

Happy birds! whom Jesus leaves
Underneath His sheltering eaves;
There they go to play and sleep,
May not I go in to weep?

All without is mean and small,
All within is vast and tall;
All without is harsh and shrill,
All within is hushed and still.

Jesus, let me enter in,
Wrap me safe from noise and sin.
Let me list the angels' songs,
See the picture of Thy wrongs;

Let me kiss Thy wounded feet,
Drink Thine incense, faint and sweet,
While the clear bells call Thee down
From Thine everlasting throne.

At Thy doorstep low I bend,
Who have neither kin nor friend;
Let me here a shelter find,
Shield the shorn lamb from the wind.

Jesu, Lord, my heart will break:
Save me for Thy great love's sake!

Enter ISENTRUDIS.

Isen. Aha! I had missed my little bird from the nest,
And judged that she was here. What's this? fie, tears?
Eliz. Go! you despise me like the rest.
Isen. Despise you?
What's here? King Andrew's child? St. John's sworn maid?
Who dares despise you? Out upon these Saxons!
They sang another note when I was younger,
When from the rich East came my queenly pearl,
Lapt on this fluttering heart, while mighty heroes
Rode by her side, and far behind us stretched
The barbs and sumpter mules, a royal train,
Laden with silks and furs, and priceless gems,
Wedges of gold, and furniture of silver,
Fit for my princess.
Eliz. Hush now, I've heard all, nurse,
A thousand times.
Isen. Oh, how their hungry mouths
Did water at the booty! Such a prize,

Since the three Kings came wandering into Cöln,
They ne'er saw, nor their fathers; — well they
knew it!
Oh, how they fawned on us! "Great Isentrudis!"
"Sweet babe!" The Landgravine did thank her
saints
As if you, or your silks, had fallen from heaven;
And now she wears your furs, and calls us gipsies.
Come tell your nurse your griefs; we'll weep
together,
Strangers in this strange land.

Eliz. I am most friendless.
The Landgravine and Agnes — you may see them
Begrudge the food I eat, and call me friend
Of knaves and serving-maids; the burly knights
Freeze me with cold blue eye: no saucy page
But points and whispers, "There goes our pet nun;
Would but her saintship leave her gold behind,
We'd give herself her furlough." Save me! save me!
All here are ghastly dreams; dead masks of stone,
And you and I, and Guta, only live:
Your eyes alone have souls. I shall go mad!
Oh! that they would but leave me all alone,
To teach poor girls, and work within my chamber,
With mine own thoughts, and all the gentle angels
Which glance about my dreams at morning-tide;
Then I should be as happy as the birds
Which sing at my bower window. Once I longed
To be beloved, — now would they but forget me!
Most vile I must be, or they could not hate me!

Isen. They are of this world, thou art not, poor
child,
Therefore they hate thee, as they did thy betters.

Eliz. But, Lewis, nurse?

Isen. He, child? he is thy knight;

Espoused from childhood: thou hast a claim upon him.
One that thou 'lt need, alas! — though, I remember —
'T is fifteen years agone — when in one cradle
We laid two fair babes for a marriage token;
And when your lips met, then you smiled, and twined
Your little limbs together. — Pray the Saints
That token stand! — He calls thee love and sister,
And brings thee gew-gaws from the wars: that 's much!
At least he 's thine if thou love him.

Eliz. If I love him?
What is this love? Why, is he not my brother
And I his sister? Till these weary wars,
The one of us without the other never
Did weep or laugh: what is 't should change us now?
You shake your head and smile.

Isen. Go to; the chafe
Comes not by wearing chains, but feeling them.

Eliz. Alas! here comes a knight across the court;
O, hide me, nurse! What 's here? this door is fast.

Isen. Nay, 't is a friend: he brought my princess hither,
Walter of Varila; I feared him once —
He used to mock our state, and say, good wine
Should want no bush, and that the cage was gay,
But that the bird must sing before he praised it.
Yet he 's a kind heart, while his bitter tongue
Awes these court popinjays at times to manners.
He will smile sadly too, when he meets my maiden;
And once he said, he was your liegeman sworn,

Since my lost mistress, weeping, to his charge
Trusted the babe she saw no more. — God help us!
Eliz. How did my mother die, nurse?
Isen. She died, my child.
Eliz. But how? Why turn away?
Too long I 've guessed at some dread mystery
I may not hear: and in my restless dreams,
Night after night, sweeps by a frantic rout
Of grinning fiends, fierce horses, bodiless hands,
Which clutch at one to whom my spirit yearns
As to a mother. There 's some fearful tie
Between me and that spirit-world, which God
Brands with His terrors on my troubled mind.
Speak! tell me, nurse! is she in heaven or hell?
Isen. God knows, my child: there are masses for her soul
Each day in every Zingar minster sung.
Eliz. But was she holy? — Died she in the Lord?
Isen. (*weeps*). Oh, God! my child! And if I told thee all,
How couldst thou mend it?
Eliz. Mend it? Oh, my Saviour!
I 'd die a saint!
Win heaven for her by prayers, and build great minsters,
Chantries, and hospitals for her; wipe out
By mighty deeds our race's guilt and shame —
But thus, poor witless orphan! (*Weeps.*)

COUNT WALTER *enters.*

Wal. Ah! my princess! accept your liegeman's knee;
Down, down, rheumatic flesh!
Eliz. Ah! Count Walter! you are too tall to kneel to little girls.

Wal. What? shall two hundredweight of hypocrisy bow down to his four-inch wooden saint, and the same weight of honesty not worship his four-foot live one? And I have a jest for you, shall make my small queen merry and wise.

Isen. You shall jest long before she 's merry.

Wal. Ah! dowers and dowagers again! The money — root of all evil.
What comes here? [*A Page enters.*
A long-winged grasshopper, all gold, green, and gauze? How these young pea-chicks must needs ape the grown peacock's frippery! Prithee, now, how many such butterflies as you suck here together on the thistle-head of royalty?

Page. Some twelve gentlemen of us, Sir — apostles of the blind archer, Love — owning no divinity but almighty beauty — no faith, no hope, no charity, but those which are kindled at her eyes.

Wal. Saints! what 's all this?

Page. Ah, Sir! none but countrymen swear by the saints nowadays: no oaths but allegorical ones, Sir, at the high table; as thus, — "By the sleeve of beauty, Madam;" or again, "By Love his martyrdoms, Sir Count;" or to a potentate, "As Jove's imperial mercy shall hear my vows, High Mightiness."

Wal. Where did the evil one set you on finding all this heathenry?

Page. Oh! we are all barristers of Love's court, Sir; we have Ovid's gay science conned, Sir, *ad unguentum*, as they say, out of the French book.

Wal. So? There are those come from Rome then will whip you and Ovid out with the same rod which the dandies of Provence felt lately to their sorrow. Oh! what blinkards are we gentle-

men, to train any dumb beasts more carefully than we do Christians; that a man shall keep his dog-breakers, and his horse-breakers, and his hawk-breakers, and never hire him a boy-breaker or two! that we should live without a qualm at dangling such a flock of mimicking parroquets at our heels a while, and then, when they are well infected, well perfumed with the wind of our vices, dropping them off, as tadpoles do their tails, joint by joint into the mud! to strain at such gnats as an ill-mouthed colt or a riotous puppy, and swallow that camel of camels, a page!

Page. Do you call me a camel, Sir?

Wal. What's your business?

Page. My errand is to the Princess here.

Eliz. To me?

Page. Yes; the Landgravine expects you at high mass; so go in, and mind you clean yourself; for every one is not as fond as you of beggars' brats, and what their clothes leave behind them.

Isen. (*strikes him*). Monkey! To whom are you speaking?

Eliz. Oh, peace, peace, peace! I'll go with him.

Page. Then be quick, my music-master's waiting. *Corpo di Bacco!* as if our elders did not teach us to whom we ought to be rude!

[*Ex.* ELIZ. *and* PAGE.

Isen. See here, Sir Saxon, how this pearl of price
Is faring in your hands! The peerless image,
To whom this court is but the tawdry frame, —
The speck of light amid its murky baseness, —
The salt which keeps it all from rotting, — cast

To be the common fool, — the laughing stock
For every beardless knave to whet his wit on!
Tar-blooded Germans! — Here 's another of them.
[*A young Knight enters.*

Knight. Heigh! Count! What? learning to sing psalms? They are waiting
For you in the manage-school, to give your judgment
On that new Norman mare.

Wal. Tell them I 'm busy.

Knight. Busy? St. Martin! Knitting stockings, eh?
To clothe the poor withal? Is that your business?
I passed that canting baby on the stairs;
Would heaven that she had tripped, and broke her goose-neck,
And left us heirs *de facto.* So, farewell. [*Exit.*

Wal. A very pretty quarrel! matter enough
To spoil a wagon-load of ash-staves on,
And break a dozen fools' backs across their cantlets.
What 's Lewis doing?

Isen. Oh — befooled, —
Bewitched with dogs and horses, like an idiot
Clutching his bauble, while a priceless jewel
Sticks at his miry heels.

Wal. The boy 's no fool, —
As good a heart as hers, but somewhat given
To hunt the nearest butterfly, and light
The fire of fancy without hanging o'er it
The porridge-pot of practice. He shall hear or ——

Isen. And quickly, for there 's treason in the wind.
They 'll keep her dower, and send her home with shame
Before the year 's out.

Wal. Humph! Some are rogues enough for 't. As it falls out, I ride with him to-day.

Isen. Upon what business?

Wal. Some shaveling has been telling him that there are heretics on his land: Stadings, worshippers of black cats, baby-eaters, and such like. He consulted me; I told him it would be time enough to see to the heretics when all the good Christians had been well looked after. I suppose the novelty of the thing smit him, for now nothing will serve but I must ride with him round half a dozen hamlets, where, with God's help, I will show him a man sty or two, that shall astonish his delicate chivalry.

Isen. Oh, here 's your time! Speak to him, noble Walter.
Stun his dull ears with praises of her grace;
Prick his dull heart with shame at his own coldness.
Oh, right us, Count.

Wal. I will, I will: go in
And dry your eyes. [*Exeunt separately.*

SCENE II

A Landscape in Thuringia. LEWIS *and* WALTER *riding.*

Lewis. So all these lands are mine; these yellow meads —
These village greens, and forest-fretted hills,
With dizzy castles crowned. Mine! Why that word
Is rich in promise, in the action bankrupt.
What faculty of mine, save dream-fed pride,
Can these things fatten? Mass! I had forgot:

I have a right to bark at trespassers.
Rare privilege! While every fowl and bush,
According to its destiny and nature
(Which were they truly mine, my power could alter),
Will live, and grow, and take no thought of me.
Those firs, before whose stealthy-marching ranks
The world-old oaks still dwindle and retreat,
If I could stay their poisoned frown, which cows
The pale shrunk underwood, and nestled seeds
Into an age of sleep, 't were something: and those men
O'er whom that one word "ownership" uprears me —
If I could make them lift a finger up
But of their own free will, I 'd own my seizin.
But now — when if I sold them, life and limb,
There 's not a sow would litter one pig less
Than when men called her mine. — Possession 's naught;
A parchment ghost; a word I am ashamed
To claim even here, lest all the forest spirits,
And bees who drain unasked the free-born flowers,
Should mock, and cry, "Vain man, not thine, but ours."

Wal. Possession 's naught? Possession 's beef and ale —
Soft bed, fair wife, gay horse, good steel. — Are they naught?
Possession means to sit astride of the world,
Instead of having it astride of you;
Is that naught? 'T is the easiest trade of all too;
For he that 's fit for nothing else, is fit
To own good land, and on the slowest dolt
His state sits easiest, while his serfs thrive best.

Lewis. How now? What need then of long discipline,
Not to mere feats of arms, but feats of soul;
To courtesies and high self-sacrifice,
To order and obedience, and the grace
Which makes commands, requests, and service, favor?
To faith and prayer, and pure thoughts, ever turned
To that Valhalla, where the virgin saints
And stainless heroes tend the Queen of heaven?
Why these, if I but need, like stalled ox
To chew the grass cut for me?

Wal. Why? Because
I have trained thee for a knight, boy, not a ruler.
All callings want their proper 'prentice time
But this of ruling; it comes by mother-wit;
And if the wit be not exceeding great,
'T is best the wit be most exceeding small;
And he that holds the reins should let the horse
Range on, feed where he will, live and let live.
Custom and selfishness will keep all steady
For half a life. — Six months before you die
You may begin to think of interfering.

Lewis. Alas! while each day blackens with fresh clouds,
Complaints of ague, fever, crumbling huts,
Of land thrown out to the forest, game and keepers,
Bailiffs and barons, plundering all alike;
Need, greed, stupidity: To clear such ruin
Would task the rich prime of some noble hero —
But can I nothing do?

Wal. Oh! plenty, Sir;
Which no man yet has done or e'er will do.
It rests with you, whether the priest be honored;
It rests with you, whether the knight be knightly;

It rests with you, whether those fields grow corn;
It rests with you, whether those toiling peasants
Lift to their masters free and loyal eyes,
Or crawl, like jaded hacks, to welcome graves.
It rests with you — and will rest.

Lewis. I'll crowd my court and dais with men of God,
As doth my peerless namesake, King of France.

Wal. Priests, Sir? The Frenchman keeps two counsellors
Worth any drove of priests.

Lewis. And who are they?

Wal. God and his lady-love. (*aside*) He'll open at that —

Lewis. I could be that man's squire.

Wal. (*aside*) Again run riot —
Now for another cast. (*aloud*) If you'd sleep sound, Sir,
You'll let priests pray for you, but school you never.

Lewis. Mass! who more fitted?

Wal. None, if you could trust them;
But they are the people's creatures; poor men give them
Their power at the church, and take it back at the ale-house:
Then what's the friar to the starving peasant?
Just what the abbot is to the greedy noble —
A scarecrow to lear wolves. Go ask the church-plate,
Safe in knight's cellars, how these priests are feared.
Bruised reeds when you most need them. — No, my Lord;
Copy them, trust them never.

Lewis. Copy? wherein?

Wal. In letting every man
Do what he likes, and only seeing he does it
As you do your work — well. That 's the Church secret
For breeding towns, as fast as you breed roe-deer;
Example, but not meddling. See that hollow —
I knew it once all heath, and deep peat-bog —
I drowned a black mare in that self-same spot
Hunting with your good father: Well, he gave
One jovial night, to six poor Erfurt monks —
Six picked-visaged, wan, bird-fingered wights —
All in their rough hair shirts, like hedgehogs starved —
I told them, six weeks' work would break their hearts:
They answered, Christ would help, and Christ's great mother,
And make them strong when weakest: So they settled:
And starved and froze.
Lewis. And dug and built, it seems.
Wal. Faith, that 's true. See — as garden walls draw snails,
They have drawn a hamlet round; the slopes are blue,
Knee-deep with flax, the orchard boughs are breaking
With strange outlandish fruits. See those young rogues
Marching to school; no poachers here, Lord Landgrave, —
Too much to be done at home; there 's not a village
Of yours, now, thrives like this. By God's good help

These men have made their ownership worth something.
Here comes one of them.
Lewis. I would speak to him —
And learn his secret. — We 'll await him here.

Enter CONRAD.

Con. Peace to you, reverend and war-worn knight,
And you, fair youth, upon whose swarthy lip
Blooms the rich promise of a noble manhood.
Methinks, if simple monks may read your thoughts,
That with no envious or distasteful eyes
Ye watch the labors of God's poor elect.
Wal. Why — we were saying, how you cunning rooks
Pitch as by instinct on the fattest fallows.
Con. For He who feeds the ravens, promiseth
Our bread and water sure, and leads us on
By peaceful streams in pastures green to lie,
Beneath our Shepherd's eye.
Lewis. In such a nook, now,
To nestle from this noisy world ——
Con. And drop
The burden of thyself upon the threshold.
Lewis. Think what rich dreams may haunt those lowly roofs!
Con. Rich dreams, — and more; their dreams will find fulfilment —
Their discipline breeds strength — 'T is we alone
Can join the patience of the laboring ox
Unto the eagle's foresight, — not a fancy
Of ours, but grows in time to mighty deeds;
Victories in heavenly warfare: but yours, yours, Sir,

Oh, choke them, choke the panting hopes of youth,
Ere they be born, and wither in slow pains,
Cast by for the next bauble!

Lewis. 'T is too true!
I dread no toil; toil is the true knight's pastime —
Faith fails, the will intense and fixed, so easy
To thee, cut off from life and love, whose powers
In one close channel must condense their stream:
But I, to whom this life blooms rich and busy,
Whose heart goes out a-Maying all the year
In this new Eden — in my fitful thought
What skill is there, to turn my faith to sight —
To pierce blank heaven, like some trained falconer
After his game, beyond all human ken?

Wal. And walk into the bog beneath your feet.

Con. And change it to firm land by magic step!
Build there cloud-cleaving spires, beneath whose shade
Great cities rise for vassals; to call forth
From plough and loom the rank unlettered hinds,
And make them saints and heroes — send them forth
To sway with heavenly craft the spirit of princes;
Change nations' destinies, and conquer worlds
With love, more mighty than the sword; what, Count?
Art thou ambitious? practical? we monks
Can teach you somewhat there too.

Lewis. Be it so;
But love you have forsworn; and what were life
Without that chivalry, which bends man's knees
Before God's image and His glory, best
Revealed in woman's beauty?

Con. Ah! poor worldlings!

Little you dream what maddening ecstasies,
What rich ideals haunt, by day and night,
Alone, and in the crowd, even to the death,
The servitors of that celestial court
Where peerless Mary, sun-enthroned, reigns,
In whom all Eden dreams of womanhood,
All grace of form, hue, sound, all beauty strewn
Like pearls unstrung, about this ruined world,
Have their fulfilment and their archetype.
Why hath the rose its scent, the lily grace?
To mirror forth her loveliness, from whom,
Primeval fount of grace, their livery came:
Pattern of Seraphs! only worthy ark
To bear her God athwart the floods of time!

Lewis. Who dare aspire to her? Alas, not I!
To me she is a doctrine, and a picture: —
I cannot live on dreams.

Con. She hath her train: —
There thou may'st choose thy love: If world-wide lore
Shall please thee, and the Cherub's glance of fire,
Let Catharine lift thy soul, and rapt with her
Question the mighty dead, until thou float
Tranced on the ethereal ocean of her spirit.
If pity father passion in thee, hang
Above Eulalia's tortured loveliness;
And for her sake, and in her strength, go forth
To do and suffer greatly. Dost thou long
For some rich heart, as deep in love as weakness,
Whose wild simplicity sweet heaven-born instincts
Alone keep sane?

Lewis. I do, I do. I 'd live
And die for each and all the three.

Con. Then go —
Entangled in the Magdalen's tresses lie;

Dream hours before her picture, till thy lips
Dare to approach her feet, and thou shalt start
To find the canvas warm with life, and matter
A moment transubstantiate to heaven.

Wal. Ay, catch his fever, Sir, and learn to take
An indigestion for a troop of angels.
Come, tell him, monk, about your magic gardens,
Where not a stringy head of kale is cut
But breeds a vision or a revelation.

Lewis. Hush, hush, Count! Speak, strange monk, strange words, and waken
Longings more strange than either.

Con. Then, if proved,
As I dare vouch thee, loyal in thy love,
Even to the Queen herself thy saintlier soul
At length may soar: perchance — Oh, bliss too great
For thought — yet possible!
Receive some token — smile — or hallowing touch
Of that white hand, beneath whose soft caress
The raging world is smoothed, and runs its course
To shadow forth her glory.

Lewis. Thou dost tempt me —
That were a knightly quest.

Con. Ay, here's true love.
Love's heaven, without its hell; the golden fruit
Without the foul husk, which at Adam's fall
Did crust it o'er with filth and selfishness.
I tempt thee heavenward — from yon azure walls
Unearthly beauties beckon — God's own mother
Waits longing for thy choice ——

Lewis. Is this a dream?

Wal. Ay, by the Living Lord, who died for you!
Will you be cozened, Sir, by these air-blown fancies,
These male hysterics, by starvation bred

And huge conceit? Cast off God's gift of manhood,
And, like the dog in the adage, drop the true bone
With snapping at the sham one in the water?
What were you born a man for?

Lewis. Ay, I know it: —
I cannot live on dreams. Oh, for one friend,
Myself, yet not myself; one not so high
But she could love me, not too pure to pardon
My sloth and meanness! Oh! for flesh and blood,
Before whose feet I could adore, yet love!
How easy then were duty! From her lips
To learn my daily task; — in her pure eyes
To see the living type of those heaven-glories
I dare not look on; — let her work her will
Of love and wisdom on these straining hinds; —
To squire a saint around her labor field,
And she and it both mine: — That were possession!

Con. The flesh, fair youth ——

Wal. Avaunt, bald snake, avaunt!
We are past your burrow now. Come, come, Lord Landgrave.
Look round, and find your saint.

Lewis. Alas! one such —
One such, I know, who upward from one cradle
Beside me like a sister — No, thank God! no sister! —
Has grown and grown, and with her mellow shade
Has blanched my thornless thoughts to her own hue,
And even now is budding into blossom,
Which never shall bear fruit, but inward still
Resorb its vital nectar, self-contained,

And leave no living copies of its beauty
To after ages. Ah! be less, sweet maid,
Less than thyself! Yet no — my wife thou might'st be,
If less than thus — but not the saint thou art.
What! shall my selfish longings drag thee down
From maid to wife? degrade the soul I worship?
That were a caitiff deed! Oh, misery!
Is wedlock treason to that purity,
Which is the jewel and the soul of wedlock?
Elizabeth! my saint! [*Exit* CONRAD.

Wal. What, Sir? the Princess?
Ye saints in heaven, I thank you!

Lewis. Oh, who else,
Who else the minutest lineament fulfils
Of this my cherished portrait?

Wal. So — 't is well.
Hear me, my Lord. — You think this dainty princess
Too perfect for you, eh? That 's well again;
For that whose price after fruition falls
May well too high be rated ere enjoyed —
In plain words, — if she looks an angel now, you will be better mated than you expected, when you find her — a woman. For flesh and blood she is, and that young blood, — whom her childish misusage and your brotherly love; her loneliness and your protection; her springing fancy and (for I may speak to you as a son) your beauty and knightly grace, have so bewitched, and as some say, degraded, that briefly, she loves you, and briefly, better, her few friends fear, than you love her.

Lewis. Loves me! My Count, that word is quickly spoken;
And yet, if it be true, it thrusts me forth

Upon a shoreless sea of untried passion,
From whence is no return.

Wal. By Siegfried's sword,
My words are true, and I came here to say them,
To thee, my son in all but blood.
Mass, I 'm no gossip. Why? What ails the boy?

Lewis. Loves me! Henceforth let no man, peering down
Through the dim glittering mine of future years,
Say to himself "Too much! this cannot be!"
To-day, and custom, wall up our horizon:
Before the hourly miracle of life
Blindfold we stand, and sigh, as though God were not.
I have wandered in the mountains, mist-bewildered,
And now a breeze comes, and the veil is lifted,
And priceless flowers, o'er which I trod unheeding,
Gleam ready for my grasp. She loves me then!
She who to me was as a nightingale
That sings in magic gardens, rock-beleaguered,
To passing angels melancholy music —
Whose dark eyes hung, like far-off evening stars,
Through rosy-cushioned windows coldly shining
Down from the cloud-world of her unknown fancy —
She, for whom holiest touch of holiest knight
Seemed all too gross — who might have been a saint
And companied with angels — thus to pluck
The spotless rose of her own maidenhood
To give it unto me!

Wal. You love her then?

Lewis. Look! If yon solid mountain were all gold,
And each particular tree a band of jewels,

And from its womb the Niebelungen hoard
With elfin wardens called me, "Leave thy love
And be our master" — I would turn away —
And know no wealth but her.

Wal. Shall I say this to her?
I am no carrier pigeon, Sir, by breed,
But now, between her friends and persecutors,
My life 's a burden.

Lewis. Persecutors! Who?
Alas! I guess it — I had known my mother
Too light for that fair saint, — but who else dare wink
When she is by? My knights?

Wal. To a man, my Lord.

Lewis. Here 's chivalry! Well, that 's soon brought to bar.
The quarrel 's mine; my lance shall clear that stain.

Wal. Quarrel with your knights? Cut your own chair-legs off!
They do but sail with the stream. Her passion, Sir,
Broke shell and ran out twittering before yours did,
And unrequited love is mortal sin
With this chaste world. My boy, my boy, I tell you,
The fault lies nearer home.

Lewis. I have played the coward —
And in the sloth of false humility,
Cast by the pearl I dared not to deserve.
How laggard I must seem to her, though she love me;
Playing with hawks and hounds, while she sits weeping!
'T is not too late.

Wal. Too late, my royal eyas?
You shall strike this deer yourself at gaze ere long —
She has no mind to slip to cover.
Lewis Come —
We 'll back — we 'll back; and you shall bear the message;
I am ashamed to speak. Tell her I love her —
That I should need to tell her! Say, my coyness
Was bred of worship, not of coldness.
Wal. Then the serfs
Must wait?
Lewis. Why not? This day to them, too, blessing brings,
Which clears from envious webs their guardian angel's wings. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

A Chamber in the Castle. SOPHIA, ELIZABETH, AGNES, ISENTRUDIS, etc., *re-entering.*

Soph. What! you will not? You hear, Dame Isentrudis,
She will not wear her coronet in the church,
Because, forsooth, the crucifix within
Is crowned with thorns. You hear her.
Eliz. Noble mother!
How could I flaunt this bauble in His face
Who hung there, naked, bleeding, all for me —
I felt it shamlessness to go so gay.
Soph. Felt? What then? Every foolish wench has feelings
In these religious days, and thinks it carnal

To wash her dishes, and obey her parents —
No wonder they ape you, if you ape them —
Go to! I hate this humble-minded pride,
Self-willed submission — to your own pert fancies;
This fog-bred mushroom-spawn of brain-sick wits,
Who make their oddities their test for grace,
And peer about to catch the general eye;
Ah! I have watched you throw your playmates down
To have the pleasure of kneeling for their pardon.
Here's sanctity — to shame your cousin and me —
Spurn rank and proper pride, and decency; —
If God has made you noble, use your rank,
If you but know how. You Landgravine? You mated
With gentle Lewis? Why, belike you'll cowl him,
As that stern prude, your aunt, cowled her poor spouse;
No — one Hedwiga at a time's enough, —
My son shall die no monk.

Isen. Beseech you, Madam, —
Weep not, my darling.

Soph. Tut — I'll speak my mind.
We'll have no saints. Thank heaven, my saintliness
Ne'er troubled my good man, by day or night.
We'll have no saints, I say; far better for you,
And no doubt pleasanter — You know your place —
At least you know your place, — to take to cloisters,
And there sit carding wool, and mumbling Latin,
With sour old maids, and maundering Magdalens,
Proud of your frost-kibed feet, and dirty serge.
There's nothing noble in you, but your blood;
And that one almost doubts. Who art thou, child?

Isen. The daughter, please your highness,
Of Andreas, King of Hungary, your better;
And your son's spouse.
Soph. I had forgotten, truly —
And you, Dame Isentrudis, are her servant,
And mine: come, Agnes, leave the gipsy ladies
To say their prayers, and set the Saints the fashion.

[SOPHIA *and* AGNES *go out.*

Isen. Proud hussy! Thou shalt set thy foot on her neck yet, darling,
When thou art Landgravine.
Eliz. And when will that be?
No, she speaks truth! I should have been a nun.
These are the wages of my cowardice, —
Too weak to face the world, too weak to leave it!
Guta. I 'll take the veil with you.
Eliz. 'T were but a moment's work, —
To slip into the convent there below,
And be at peace for ever. And you, my nurse?
Isen. I will go with thee, child, where'er thou goest.
But Lewis?
Eliz. Ah! my brother! No, I dare not —
I dare not turn for ever from this hope,
Though it be dwindled to a thread of mist.
Oh! that we two could flee and leave this Babel!
Oh! if he were but some poor chapel-priest,
In lonely mountain valleys far away;
And I his serving-maid, to work his vestments,
And dress his scrap of food, and see him stand
Before the altar like a rainbowed saint;
To take the blessed wafer from his hand,
Confess my heart to him, and all night long

Pray for him while he slept, or through the lattice
Watch while he read, and see the holy thoughts
Swell in his big deep eyes. — Alas! that dream
Is wilder than the one that 's fading even now!
Who 's here? [*A Page enters.*

Page. The Count of Varila, Madam, begs permission to speak with you.

Eliz. With me? What 's this new terror?
Tell him I wait him.

Isen. (*aside*). Ah! my old heart sinks —
God send us rescue! Here the champion comes.

COUNT WALTER *enters.*

Wal. Most learned, fair, and sanctimonious Princess —
Plague, what comes next? I had something orthodox ready;
'T is dropped out by the way. — Mass! here 's the pith on 't. —
Madam, I come a-wooing; and for one
Who is as only worthy of your love,
As you of his; he bids me claim the spousals
Made long ago between you, — and yet leaves
Your fancy free, to grant or pass that claim;
And being that Mercury is not my planet,
He hath advised himself to set herein,
With pen and ink, what seemed good to him,
As passport to this jewelled mirror, pledge
Unworthy of his worship. [*Gives a letter and jewel.*

Isen. Nunc Domine dimittis servam tuam!

Elizabeth looks over the letter and casket, claps her hands, and bursts into childish laughter.

Why here 's my Christmas tree come after Lent —
Espousals? pledges? by our childish love?

Pretty words for folks to think of at the wars, —
And pretty presents come of them! Look, Guta!
A crystal clear, and carven on the reverse,
The blessed rood. He told me once — one night,
When we did sit in the garden — What was I saying?

Wal. My fairest Princess, as ambassador,
What shall I answer?

Eliz. Tell him — tell him — God!
Have I grown mad, or a child, within the moment?
The earth has lost her gray sad hue, and blazes
With her old life-light; hark! yon wind's a song —
Those clouds are angels' robes. — That fiery west
Is paved with smiling faces. — I am a woman,
And all things bid me love! my dignity
Is thus to cast my virgin pride away,
And find my strength in weakness. — Busy brain!
Thou keep'st pace with my heart; old lore, old fancies,
Buried for years, leap from their tombs, and proffer
Their magic service to my new-born spirit.
I'll go — I am not mistress of myself —
Send for him — bring him to me — he is mine!
[*Exit.*

Isen. Ah! blessed Saints! how changed upon the moment!
She is grown taller, trust me, and her eye
Flames like a fresh-caught hind's. She that was christened
A brown mouse for her stillness! Good my Lord!
Now shall mine old bones see the grave in peace!

Scene IV

The Bridal Feast. Elizabeth, Lewis, Sophia, *and Company seated at the Dais table. Court Minstrel and Court Fool sitting on the Dais steps.*

Min. How gaily smile the heavens,
The light winds whisper gay;
For royal birth and knightly worth
Are knit to one to-day.

Fool (*drowning his voice*).
So we'll flatter them up, and we'll cocker them up.
Till we turn young brains;
And pamper the brach till we make her a wolf,
And get bit by the legs for our pains.

Monks (*chanting without*).
A fastu et superbia
Domine libera nos.

Min. 'Neath sandal red and samité,
Are knights and ladies set;
The henchmen tall stride through the hall,
The board with wine is wet.

Fool. Oh! merrily growls the starving hind,
At my full skin;
And merrily howl wolf, wind, and owl,
While I lie warm within.

Monks. *A luxu et avaritiâ*
Domine libera nos.

Min. Hark! from the bridal bower,
Rings out the bridesmaid's song;
"'T is the mystic hour of an untried power
The bride she tarries long."

Fool. She 's schooling herself and she 's steeling herself,
Against the dreary day,
When she 'll pine and sigh from her lattice high
For the knight that 's far away.

Monks. *A carnis illectamentis*
Domine libera nos.

Min. Blest maid! fresh roses o'er thee
The careless years shall fling;
While days and nights shall new delights
To sense and fancy bring.

Fool. Satins and silks, and feathers and lace,
Will gild life's pill;
In jewels and gold folks cannot grow old,
Fine ladies will never fall ill.

Monks. *A vanitatibus sæculi*
Domine libera nos.

[SOPHIA *descends from the Dais, leading* ELIZABETH, *Ladies follow.*]

Sophia (*to the Fool*). Silence, you screech-owl. — Come strew flower , fair ladies,
And lead into her bower our fairest bride,
The cynosure of love and beauty here,
Who shrines heaven's graces in earth's richest casket.

Eliz. I come. (*aside*) Here, Guta, take those monks a fee —
Tell them I thank them — bid them pray for me.
I am half mazed with trembling joy within,
And noisy wassail round. 'T is well, for else
The spectre of my duties and my dangers
Would whelm my heart with terror. Ah! poor self!

Thou took'st this for the term and bourne of
troubles —
And now 't is here, thou findest it the gate
Of new sin-cursed infinities of labor,
Where thou must do, or die!
(*aloud*) Lead on. I'll follow. [*Exeunt.*

Fool. There, now. No fee for the fool; and yet my prescription was as good as those old Jeremies'. But in law, physic, and divinity folks had sooner be poisoned in Latin, than saved in the mother-tongue.

ACT II

SCENE I. A.D. 1221–27

ELIZABETH'S *Bower. Night.* LEWIS *sleeping in an Alcove.* ELIZABETH *lying on the Floor in the Foreground.*

Eliz. No streak yet in the blank and eyeless east —
More weary hours to ache, and smart, and shiver
On these bare boards, within a step of bliss.
Why peevish? 'T is mine own will keeps me here —
And yet I hate myself for that same will:
Fightings within and out! How easy 't were, now,
Just to be like the rest, and let life run —
To use up to the rind what joys God sends us,
Not thus forestall His rod: What! and so lose
The strength which comes by suffering? Well, if grief
Be gain, mine 's double — fleeing thus the snare
Of yon luxurious and unnerving down,
And widowed from mine Eden. And why widowed?
Because they tell me, love is of the flesh,
And that 's our house-bred foe, the adder in our bosoms.
Which warmed to life, will sting us. They must know ——
I do confess mine ignorance, Oh, Lord!
Mine earnest will these painful limbs may prove.

. . . . . .

And yet I swore to love him. — So I do
No more than I have sworn. Am I to blame
If God makes wedlock that, which if it be not,
It were a shame for modest lips to speak it,
And silly doves are better mates than we?
And yet our love is Jesus' due, — and all things
Which share with Him divided empery
Are snares and idols — "To love, to cherish, and to obey!"

. . . . . .

Oh! deadly riddle! Rent and twofold life!
Oh! cruel troth! To keep thee or to break thee
Alike seems sin! Oh! thou beloved tempter.
[*Turning toward the bed.*
Who first didst teach me love, why on thyself
From God divert thy lesson? Wilt provoke Him?
What if mine heavenly Spouse in jealous ire
Should smite mine earthly spouse? Have I two husbands?
The words are horror — yet they are orthodox!
[*Rises and goes to the window.*

. . . . . .

How many many brows of happy lovers
The fragrant lips of night even now are kissing!
Some wandering hand in hand through arched lanes;
Some listening for loved voices at the lattice;
Some steeped in dainty dreams of untried bliss;
Some nestling soft and deep in well-known arms,
Whose touch makes sleep rich life. The very birds
Within their nests are wooing! So much love!
All seek their mates, or finding, rest in peace;
The earth seems one vast bride-bed. Doth God tempt us?
Is 't all a veil to blind our eyes from Him?

A fire-fly at the candle. 'T is love leads him;
Love 's light, and light is love: Oh, Eden! Eden!
Eve was a virgin there, they say; God knows.
Must all this be as it had never been?
Is it all a fleeting type of higher love?
Why, if the lesson 's pure, is not the teacher
Pure also? Is it my shame to feel no shame?
Am I more clean, the more I scent uncleanness?
Shall base emotions picture Christ's embrace?
Rest, rest, torn heart! Yet where? in earth or heaven?
Still, from out the bright abysses, gleams our Lady's silver footstool,
Still the light-world sleeps beyond her, though the night-clouds fleet below.
Oh! that I were walking, far above, upon that dappled pavement,
Heaven's floor, which is the ceiling of the dungeon where we lie.
Ah, what blessed Saints might meet me, on that platform, sliding silent,
Past us in its airy travels, angel-wafted, mystical!
They perhaps might tell me all things, opening up the secret fountains
Which now struggle, dark and turbid, through their dreary prison clay.
Love! art thou an earth-born streamlet, that thou seek'st the lowest hollows?
Sure some vapors float up from thee, mingling with the highest blue.
Spirit-love in spirit-bodies, melted into one existence —
Joining praises through the ages — Is it all a minstrel's dream?
Alas! he wakes. [LEWIS *rises.*

Lewis. Ah! faithless beauty,
Is this your promise, that whene'er you prayed
I should be still the partner of your vigils,
And learn from you to pray? Last night I lay dissembling
When she who woke you, took my feet for yours:
Now I shall seize my lawful prize perforce.
Alas! what's this? These shoulders' cushioned ice,
And thin soft flanks, with purple lashes all,
And weeping furrows traced! Ah! precious life-blood!
Who has done this?
Eliz. Forgive! 't was I — my maidens —
Lewis. O ruthless hags!
Eliz. Not so, not so — They wept
When I did bid them, as I bid thee now
To think of nought but love.
Lewis. Elizabeth!
Speak! I will know the meaning of this madness!
Eliz. Beloved, thou hast heard how godly souls,
In every age, have tamed the rebel flesh
By such sharp lessons. I must tread their paths,
If I would climb the mountains where they rest.
Grief is the gate of bliss — why wedlock — knighthood —
A mother's joy — a hard-earned field of glory —
By tribulation come — so doth God's kingdom.
Lewis. But doleful nights, and self-inflicted tortures —
Are these the love of God? Is He well pleased
With this stern holocaust of health and joy?
Eliz. What! Am I not as gay a lady-love
As ever clipt in arms a noble knight?
Am I not blithe as bird the live-long day?

It pleases me to bear what you call pain,
Therefore to me 't is pleasure: joy and grief
Are the will's creatures; martyrs kiss the stake —
The moorland colt enjoys the thorny furze —
The dullest boor will seek a fight, and count
His pleasure by his wounds; you must forget, love,
Eve's curse lays suffering, as their natural lot,
On womankind, till custom makes it light.
I know the use of pain; bar not the leech
Because his cure is bitter — 'T is such medicine
Which breeds that paltry strength, that weak devotion,
For which you say you love me. — Ay, which brings
Even when most sharp, a stern and awful joy
As its attendant angel — I 'll say no more —
Not even to thee — command, and I 'll obey thee.

Lewis. Thou casket of all graces! fourfold wonder
Of wit and beauty, love and wisdom! Canst thou
Beatify the ascetic's savagery
To heavenly prudence? Horror melts to pity,
And pity kindles to adoring shower
Of radiant tears! Thou tender cruelty!
Gay smiling martyrdom! Shall I forbid thee?
Limit thy depth by mine own shallowness?
Thy courage by my weakness? Where thou darest,
I 'll shudder and submit. I kneel here spell-bound
Before my bleeding Saviour's living likeness
To worship, not to cavil: I had dreamt of such things,
Dim heard in legends, while my pitiful blood
Tingled through every vein, and wept, and swore

'T was beautiful, 't was Christ-like — had I thought
That thou wert such: —

Eliz. You would have loved me still?

Lewis. I have gone mad, I think, at every parting
At mine own terrors for thee. No; I'll learn to glory
In that which makes thee glorious! Noble stains!
I'll call them rose leaves out of paradise
Strewn on the wreathed snows, or rubies dropped
From martyrs' diadems, prints of Jesus' cross
Too truly borne, alas!

Eliz. I think, mine own,
I am forgiven at last?

Lewis. To-night, my sister —
Henceforth I'll clasp thee to my heart so fast
Thou shalt not 'scape unnoticed.

Eliz. (*laughing*) We shall see —
Now I must stop those wise lips with a kiss,
And lead thee back to scenes of simpler bliss.

Scene II

A Chamber in the Castle. Elizabeth — *the Fool* — Isentrudis — Guta *singing.*

Far among the lonely hills,
As I lay beside my sheep,
Rest came down upon my soul,
From the everlasting deep.

Changeless march the stars above,
Changeless morn succeeds to even;
And the everlasting hills,
Changeless watch the changeless heaven.

See the rivers, how they run,
Changeless to the changeless sea;
All around is forethought sure,
Fixed will and stern decree.

Can the sailor move the main?
Will the potter heed the clay?
Mortal! where the spirit drives,
Thither must the wheels obey.

Neither ask, nor fret, nor strive:
Where thy path is, thou shalt go.
He who made the streams of time
Wafts thee down to weal or woe.

Eliz. That's a sweet song, and yet it does not chime
With my heart's inner voice. Where had you it, Guta?

Guta. From a nun who was a shepherdess in her youth — sadly plagued she was by a cruel stepmother, till she fled to a convent and found rest to her soul.

Fool. No doubt; nothing so pleasant as giving up one's will in one's own way. But she might have learnt all that without taking cold on the hill-tops.

Eliz. Where then, Fool?

Fool. At any market-cross where two or three rogues are together, who have neither grace to mend, nor courage to say "I did it." Now you shall see the shepherdess' baby dressed in my cap and bells. [*Sings.*

When I was a greenhorn and young,
And wanted to be and to do,
I puzzled my brains about choosing my line,
Till I found out the way that things go.

The same piece of clay makes a tile,
A pitcher, a taw, or a brick:
Dan Horace knew life; you may cut out a saint,
Or a bench, from the self-same stick.

The urchin who squalls in a jail,
By circumstance turns out a rogue;
While the castle-born brat is a senator born,
Or a saint, if religion 's in vogue.

We fall on our legs in this world,
Blind kittens, tossed in neck and heels:
'T is Dame Circumstance licks Nature's cubs into shape,
She 's the mill-head, if we are the wheels.

Then why puzzle and fret, plot and dream?
He that 's wise will just follow his nose;
Contentedly fish, while he swims with the stream;
'T is no business of his where it goes.

Eliz. Far too well sung for such a saucy song. So go.

Fool. Ay, I 'll go. Whip the dog out of church, and then rate him for being no Christian.

[*Exit Fool.*

Eliz. Guta, there is sense in that knave's ribaldry:
We must not thus baptize our idleness,
And call it resignation: Which is love?
To do God's will, or merely suffer it?
I do not love that contemplative life:
No! I must headlong into seas of toil,
Leap forth from self, and spend my soul on others.
Oh! contemplation palls upon the spirit,

Like the chill silence of an autumn sun:
While action, like the roaring south-west wind,
Sweeps laden with elixirs, with rich draughts
Quickening the wombed earth.

Guta. And yet what bliss,
When dying in the darkness of God's light,
The soul can pierce these blinding webs of nature,
And float up to The Nothing, which is all things —
The ground of being, where self-forgetful silence
Is emptiness,— emptiness, fulness,— fulness, God,—
Till we touch Him, and like a snow-flake, melt
Upon His light-sphere's keen circumference!

Eliz. Hast thou felt this?

Guta. In part.

Eliz. Oh, happy Guta!
Mine eyes are dim — and what if I mistook
For God's own self, the phantoms of my brain?
And who am I, that my own will's intent
Should put me face to face with the living God?
I, thus thrust down from the still lakes of thought
Upon a boiling crater-field of labor.
No! He must come to me, not I to Him;
If I see God, beloved, I must see Him
In mine own self: —

Guta. Thyself?

Eliz. Why start, my sister?
God is revealed in the Crucified:
The Crucified must be revealed in me: —
I must put on His righteousness; show forth
His sorrow's glory; hunger, weep with Him;
Writhe with His stripes, and let this aching flesh
Sink through His fiery baptism into death,
That I may rise with Him, and in His likeness
May ceaseless heal the sick, and soothe the sad,
And give away like Him this flesh and blood

To feed His lambs — ay — we must die with Him
To sense — and love —

Guta. To love? What then becomes
Of marriage vows?

Eliz. I know it — so speak not of them.
Oh! that's the flow, the chasm in all my longings,
Which I have spanned with cobweb arguments,
Yet yawns before me still, where'er I turn,
To bar me from perfection; had I given
My virgin all to Christ! I was not worthy!
I could not stand alone!

Guta. Here comes your husband.

Eliz. He comes! my sun! and every thrilling vein
Proclaims my weakness.

LEWIS *enters.*

Lewis. Good news, my Princess; in the street below
Conrad, the man of God from Marpurg, stands,
And from a bourne-stone to the simple folk
Does thunder doctrine, preaching faith, repentance,
And dread of all foul heresies; his eyes
On heaven still set, save when with searching frown
He lours upon the crowd, who round him cower
Like quails beneath the hawk, and gape, and tremble,
Now raised to heaven, now down again to hell.
I stood beside and heard; like any doe's
My heart did rise and fall.

Eliz. Oh, let us hear him!
We too need warning; shame, if we let pass,
Unentertained, God's angels on their way.
Send for him, brother.

Lewis. Let a knight go down
And say to the holy man, the Landgrave Lewis

With humble greetings prays his blessedness
To make these secular walls the spirit's temple
At least to-night.

Eliz. Now go, my ladies, both —
Prepare fit lodgings, — let your courtesies
Retain in our poor courts the man of God.

[*Exeunt.* LEWIS *and* ELIZABETH *are left alone.*

Now hear me, best beloved: — I have marked this man:
And that which hath scared others, draws me towards him:
He has the graces which I want; his sternness
I envy for its strength; his fiery boldness
I call the earnestness which dares not trifle
With life's huge stake; his coldness but the calm
Of one who long hath found, and keeps unwavering,
Clear purpose still; he hath the gift which speaks
The deepest things most simply; in his eye
I dare be happy — weak I dare not be.
With such a guide, — to save this little heart —
The burden of self-rule — Oh — half my work
Were eased, and I could live for thee and thine,
And take no thought of self. Oh, be not jealous,
Mine own, mine idol! For thy sake I ask it —
I would but be a mate and help more meet
For all thy knightly virtues.

Lewis. 'T is too true!
I have felt it long; we stand, two weakling children,
Under too huge a burden, while temptations
Like adders swarm up round: I must be led —
But thou alone shalt lead me.

Eliz. I? beloved!
This load more? Strengthen, Lord, the feeble knees!

Lewis. Yes! thou, my queen, who making thyself once mine,
Hast made me sevenfold thine; I own thee guide
Of my devotions, mine ambition's lodestar,
The Saint whose shrine I serve with lance and lute;
If thou wilt have a ruler, let him be,
Through thee, the ruler of thy slave. [*Kneels to her.*
Eliz. Oh, kneel not —
But grant my prayer — If we shall find this man,
As well I know him, worthy, let him be
Director of my conscience and my actions
With all but thee — Within love's inner shrine
We shall be still alone — But joy! here comes
Our embassy, successful.

Enter CONRAD, *with* COUNT WALTER, *Monks, Ladies, etc.*

Conrad. Peace to this house.
Eliz. Hail to your holiness.
Lewis. The odor of your sanctity and might,
With balmy steam and gales of Paradise,
Forestalls you hither.
Eliz. Bless us doubly, master,
With holy doctrine, and with holy prayers.
Con. Children, I am the servant of Christ's servants —
And needs must yield to those who may command
By right of creed; I do accept your bounty —
Not for myself, but for that priceless name,
Whose dread authority and due commission,
Attested by the seal of His vicegerent,
I bear unworthy here; through my vile lips
Christ and His vicar thank you; on myself —
And these, my brethren, Christ's adopted poor —

A menial's crust, and some waste nook, or dog-
hutch,
Wherein the worthless flesh may nightly hide,
Are best bestowed.

Eliz. You shall be where you will —
Do what you will; unquestioned, unobserved,
Enjoy, refrain; silence and solitude,
The better part which such like spirits choose,
We will provide; only be you our master,
And we your servants, for a few short days:
Oh, blessed days!

Con. Ah, be not hasty, madam;
Think whom you welcome; one who has no skill
To wink and speak smooth things; whom fear of
God
Constrains to daily wrath; who brings, alas!
A sword, not peace: within whose bones the word
Burns like a pent-up fire, and makes him bold,
If aught in you or yours shall seem amiss,
To cry aloud and spare not; let me go,
To pray for you — as I have done long time,
Is sweeter than to chide you.

Eliz. Then your prayers
Shall drive home your rebukes; for both we need
you —
Our snares are many, and our sins are more.
So say not nay — I 'll speak with you apart.

[ELIZABETH *and* CONRAD *retire.*

Lewis (*aside*). Well, Walter mine, how like you
the good legate?

Wal. Walter has seen nought of him but his
eye;
And that don't please him.

Lewis. How so, sir! that face
Is pure and meek — a calm and thoughtful eye.

Wal. A shallow, stony, steadfast eye; that looks at neither man nor beast in the face, but at something invisible a yard before him, through you and past you, at a fascination, a ghost of fixed purposes that haunts him, from which neither reason nor pity will turn him. I have seen such an eye in men possessed — with devils, or with self: sleek, passionless men, who are too refined to be manly, and measure their grace by their effeminacy; crooked vermin, who swarm up in pious times, being drowned out of their earthly haunts by the spring-tide of religion; and so making a gain of godliness, swim upon the first of the flood, till it cast them ashore on the firm beach of wealth and station. I always mistrust those wall-eyed saints.

Lewis. Beware, Sir Count; your keen and worldly wit
Is good for worldly uses, not to tilt
Withal at holy men and holy things.
He pleases well the spiritual sense
Of my most peerless lady, whose discernment
Is still the touchstone of my grosser fancy:
He is her friend, and mine: and you must love him
Even for our sakes alone. (*to a bystander*) A word with you, sir.

[*In the meantime* ELIZABETH *and* CONRAD *are talking together.*]

Eliz. I would be taught —

Con. It seems you claim some knowledge,
By choosing thus your teacher.

Eliz. I would know more ——

Con. Go then to the schools — and be no wiser, madam;
And let God's charge here run to waste, to seek

The bitter fruit of knowledge — hunt the rainbow
O'er hill and dale, while wisdom rusts at home.

Eliz. I would be holy, master —

Con. Be so, then.
God's will stands fair: 't is thine which fails, if any.

Eliz. I would know how to rule —

Con. Then must thou learn
The needs of subjects, and be ruled thyself.
Sink, if thou longest to rise; become most small —
The strength which comes by weakness makes thee great.

Eliz. I will.

Lewis. What, still at lessons? Come, my fairest sister,
Usher the holy man unto his lodgings. [*Exeunt.*

Wal. (*alone*). So, so, the birds are limed: — Heaven grant that we do not soon see them stowed in separate cages. Well, here my prophesying ends. I shall go to my lands, and see how much the gentlemen my neighbors have stolen off them the last week, — Priests? Frogs in the king's bedchamber! What says the song?

I once had a hound, a right good hound,
A hound both fleet and strong:
He ate at my board, and he slept by my bed,
And ran with me all the day long.
But my wife took a priest, a shaveling priest,
And "such friendships are carnal," quoth he.
So my wife and her priest they drugged the poor beast,
And the ratsbane is waiting for me.

Scene III

The Gateway of a Convent. Night.

Enter Conrad.

Con. This night she swears obedience to me!
Wondrous Lord!
How hast Thou opened a path, where my young dreams
May find fulfilment: there are prophecies
Upon her, make me bold. Why comes she not?
She should be here by now. Strange, how I shrink —
I, who ne'er yet felt fear of man or fiend.
Obedience to my will! An awful charge!
But yet, to have the training of her sainthood;
To watch her rise above this wild world's waves
Like floating water-lily, towards heaven's light
Opening its virgin snows, with golden eye
Mirroring the golden sun; to be her champion,
And war with fiends for her; that were a "quest";
That were true chivalry; to bring my Judge
This jewel for His crown; this noble soul,
Worth thousand prudish clods of barren clay,
Who mope for heaven because earth's grapes are sour —
Her, full of youth, flushed with the heart's rich first-fruits,
Tangled in earthly pomp — and earthly love.
Wife? Saint by her face she should be: with such looks
The queen of heaven, perchance, slow pacing came
Adown our sleeping wards, when Dominic
Sank fainting, drunk with beauty: — she is most fair!

Pooh! I know nought of fairness — this I know,
She calls herself my slave, with such an air
As speaks her queen, not slave; that shall be looked to —
She must be pinioned, or she will range abroad
Upon too bold a wing; 't will cost her pain —
But what of that? there are worse things than pain —
What! not yet here? I 'll in, and there await her
In prayer before the altar: I have need on 't:
And shall have more before this harvest 's ripe.

As CONRAD *goes out*, ELIZABETH, ISENTRUDIS, *and* GUTA *enter.*

Eliz. I saw him just before us: let us onward;
We must not seem to loiter.
Isen. Then you promise
Exact obedience to his sole direction
Henceforth in every scruple?
Eliz. In all I can,
And be a wife.
Guta. Is it not a double bondage?
A husband's will is clog enough. Be sure,
Though free, I crave more freedom.
Eliz. So do I —
This servitude shall free me — from myself.
Therefore I 'll swear.
Isen. To what?
Eliz. I know not wholly:
But this I know, that I shall swear to-night
To yield my will unto a wiser will;
To see God's truth through eyes which, like the eagle's,
From higher Alps undazzled eye the sun.

Compelled to discipline from which my sloth
Would shrink, unbidden, — to deep devious paths
Which my dull sight would miss, I now can plunge,
And dare life's eddies fearless.

Isen. You will repent it.

Eliz. I do repent, even now. Therefore I'll swear,
And bind myself to that, which once being right,
Will not be less right, when I shrink from it.
No; if the end be gained — if I be raised
To freer, nobler use, I'll dare, I'll welcome
Him and his means, though they were racks and flames.
Come, ladies, let us in, and to the chapel.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene IV

A Chamber. Guta, Isentrudis, *and a Lady.*

Lady. Doubtless she is most holy — but for wisdom —
Say if 't is wise to spurn all rules, all censures,
And mountebank it in the public ways
Till she becomes a jest?

Isen. How 's this?

Lady. For one thing —
Yestreen I passed her in the open street,
Following the vocal line of chanting priests,
Clad in rough serge, and with her bare soft feet
Wooing the ruthless flints; the gaping crowd
Unknowing whom they held, did thrust and jostle
Her tender limbs; she saw me as she passed —
And blushed and veiled her face, and smiled withal.

Isen. Oh, think, she 's not seventeen yet.

Guta. Why expect
Wisdom with love in all? Each has his gift —
Our souls are organ pipes of diverse stop
And various pitch; each with its proper notes
Thrilling beneath the self-same breath of God.
Though poor alone, yet joined, they 're harmony.
Besides these higher spirits must not bend
To common methods; in their inner world
They move by broader laws, at whose expression
We must adore, not cavil: here she comes —
The ministering Saint, fresh from the poor of Christ.

ELIZABETH *enters without cloak or shoes, carrying an empty basket.*

Isen. What's here, my Princess? Guta, fetch her robes!
Rest, rest, my child!
Eliz. (*throwing herself on a seat*). Oh! I have seen such things!
I shudder still; your bright looks dazzle me;
As those who long in hideous darkness pent
Blink at the daily light; this room 's too gay!
We sit in a cloud, and sing, like pictured angels,
And say, the world runs smooth — while right below
Welters the black fermenting heap of life
On which our state is built: I saw this day
What we might be, and still be Christian women:
And mothers too — I saw one, laid in childbed
These three cold weeks upon the black damp straw;
No nurses, cordials, or that nice parade
With which we try to balk the curse of Eve —
And yet she laughed, and showed her buxom boy,
And said, another week, so please the Saints,
She 'd be at work a-field. Look here — and here —
[*Pointing round the room.*

I saw no such things there; and yet they lived.
Our wanton accidents take root, and grow
To vaunt themselves God's laws, until our clothes,
Our gems, and gaudy books, and cushioned litters
Become ourselves, and we would fain forget
There live who need them not.

[GUTA *offers to robe her.*

Let be, beloved —
I will taste somewhat this same poverty —
Try these temptations, grudges, gnawing shames,
For which 't is blamed; how probe an unfelt evil?
Would'st be the poor man's friend? Must freeze with him —
Test sleepless hunger — let thy crippled back
Ache o'er the endless furrow; how was He,
The blessed One, made perfect? Why, by grief —
The fellowship of voluntary grief —
He read the tear-stained book of poor men's souls,
As I must learn to read it. Lady! lady!
Wear but one robe the less — forego one meal —
And thou shalt taste the core of many tales
Which now flit past thee, like a minstrel's songs,
The sweeter for their sadness.

Lady. Heavenly wisdom!
Forgive me!

Eliz. How? What wrong is mine, fair dame?

Lady. I thought you, to my shame — less wise than holy.
But you have conquered: I will test these sorrows
On mine own person; I have toyed too long
In painted pinnace down the stream of life,
Witched with the landscape, while the weary rowers
Faint at the groaning oar: I 'll be thy pupil.
Farewell. Heaven bless thy labors and thy lesson.

[*Exit.*

Isen. We are alone. Now tell me, dearest lady,
How came you in this plight?
Eliz. Oh! chide not, nurse —
My heart is full — and yet I went not far —
Even here, close by, where my own bower looks down
Upon that unknown sea of wavy roofs,
I turned into an alley 'neath the wall —
And stepped from earth to hell. — The light of heaven,
The common air, was narrow, gross, and dun;
The tiles did drop from the eaves; the unhinged doors
Tottered o'er inky pools, where reeked and curdled
The offal of a life; the gaunt-haunched swine
Growled at their christened playmates o'er the scraps.
Shrill mothers cursed; wan children wailed; sharp coughs
Rang through the crazy chambers; hungry eyes
Glared dumb reproach, and old perplexity,
Too stale for words; o'er still and webless looms
The listless craftsmen through their elf-locks scowled;
These were my people! all I had, I gave —
They snatched it thankless (was it not their own?
Wrung from their veins, returning all too late?);
Or in the new delight of rare possession,
Forgot the giver; one did sit apart,
And shivered on a stone; beneath her rags
Nestled two impish, fleshless, leering boys,
Grown old before their youth; they cried for bread —
She chid them down, and hid her face and wept;
I had given all — I took my cloak, my shoes

(What could I else? 'T was but a moment's want,
Which she had borne and borne, day after day),
And clothed her bare gaunt arms and purpled feet,
Then slunk ashamed away to wealth and honor.

CONRAD *enters.*

What! Conrad? unannounced! This is too bold!
Peace! I have lent myself — and I must take
The usury of that loan: your pleasure, master?

Con. Madam, but yesterday, I bade your presence,
To hear the preached word of God; I preached —
And yet you came not.— Where is now your oath?
Where is the right to bid, you gave to me?
Am I your ghostly guide? I asked it not.
Of your own will you tendered that, which, given,
Became not choice, but duty. — What is here?
Think not that alms, or lowly-seeming garments,
Self-willed humilities, pride's decent mummers,
Can raise above obedience; she from God
Her sanction draws, while these we forge ourselves,
Mere tools to clear her necessary path.
Go free — thou art no slave: God doth not own
Unwilling service, and His ministers
Must lure, not drag in leash; henceforth I leave thee:
Riot in thy self-willed fancies; pick thy steps
By thine own will-o'-the-wisp toward the pit;
Farewell, proud girl. [*Exit* CONRAD.

Eliz. Oh, God! What have I done?
I have cast off the clue of this world's maze,
And, like an idiot, let my boat adrift
Above the waterfall! — I had no message —
How's this?

Isen. We passed it by, as matter of no moment
Upon the sudden coming of your guests.

Eliz. No moment! 'T is enough to have driven him forth —
And that's enough to damn me: I'll not chide you —
I can see nothing but my loss; I'll to him —
I'll go in sackcloth, bathe his feet with tears —
And know nor sleep nor food till I am forgiven —
And you must with me, ladies. Come and find him.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene V

A Hall in the Castle. In the background a Group of diseased and deformed Beggars; Conrad *entering,* Elizabeth *comes forward to meet him.*

Con. What dost thou, daughter?
Eliz. Ah, my honored master!
That name speaks pardon, sure.
Con. What dost thou, daughter?
Eliz. I have been washing these poor people's feet.
Con. A wise humiliation.
Eliz. So I meant it —
And use it as a penance for my pride;
And yet, alas, through my own vulgar likings
Or stubborn self-conceit, 't is none to me.
I marvel how the Saints thus tamed their spirits:
Sure to be humbled by such toil, but proves,
Not cures, our lofty mind.
Con. Thou speakest well —
The knave who serves unto another's needs
Knows himself abler than the man who needs him;

And she who stoops, will not forget, that stooping
Implies a height to stoop from.

Eliz. Could I see
My Saviour in His poor!

Con. Thou shalt hereafter:
But now to wash Christ's feet were dangerous honor
For weakling grace; would you be humble, daughter,
You must look up, not down, and see yourself
A paltry atom, sap-transmitting vein
Of Christ's vast vine; the pettiest joint and member
Of His great body; own no strength, no will,
Save that which from the ruling head's command
Through me, as nerve, derives; let thyself die —
And dying, rise again to fuller life.
To be a whole is to be small and weak —
To be a part is to be great and mighty
In the one spirit of the mighty whole —
The spirit of the martyrs and the Saints —
The spirit of the Queen, on whose towered neck
We hang, blest ringlets!

Eliz. Why! thine eyes flash fire!

Con. But hush! such words are not for courts and halls —
Alone with God and me, thou shalt hear more.

[*Exit* CONRAD.

Eliz. As when rich chanting ceases suddenly —
And the rapt sense collapses! — Oh, that Lewis
Could feed my soul thus! But to work — to work —
What wilt thou, little maid? Ah, I forgot thee —
Thy mother lies in childbed — Say, in time
I'll bring the baby to the font myself.

It knits them unto me, and me to them,
That bond of sponsorship — How now, good dame —
Whence then so sad?

Woman. An 't please your nobleness,
My neighbor Gretl is with her husband laid
In burning fever.

Eliz. I will come to them.

Woman. Alack, the place is foul for such as you;
And fear of plague has cleared the lane of lodgers;
If you could send ——

Eliz. What? where I am afraid
To go myself, send others? That 's strange doctrine.
I 'll be with you anon. [*Goes up into the Hall.*

ISENTRUDIS *enters with a basket.*

Isen. Why, here 's a weight — these cordials now, and simples,
Want a stout page to bear them; yet her fancy
Is still to go alone, to help herself. —
Where will 't all end? In madness, or the grave?
No limbs can stand these drudgeries: no spirit
The fretting harrow which this ruffian priest
Calls education —
Ah! here comes our Count.

[COUNT WALTER *enters as from a journey.*]

Too late, sir, and too seldom — Where have you been
These four months past, while we are sold for bond-slaves
Unto a peevish friar?

Wal. Why, my fair rosebud —
A trifle overblown, but not less sweet —
I have been pining for you, till my hair
Is as gray as any badger's.

Isen. I'll not jest.

Wal. What? has my wall-eyed Saint shown you his temper?

Isen. The first of his peevish fancies was, that she should eat nothing which was not honestly and peaceably come by.

Wal. Why, I heard that you too had joined that sect.

Isen. And more fool I. But ladies are bound to set an example — while they are not bound to ask where everything comes from: with her, poor child, scruples and starvation were her daily diet; meal after meal she rose from table empty, unless the Landgrave nodded and winked her to some lawful eatable; till she that used to take her food like an angel, without knowing it, was thinking from morning to night whether she might eat this, that, or the other.

Wal. Poor Eves! if the world leaves you innocent, the Church will not. Between the devil and the director, you are sure to get your share of the apples of knowledge.

Isen. True enough. She complained to Conrad of her scruples, and he told her, that by the law was the knowledge of sin.

Wal. But what said Lewis?

Isen. As much bewitched as she, sir. He has told her, and more than her, that were it not for the laughter and ill-will of his barons, he would join her in the same abstinence. But all this is child's play to the friar's last outbreak.

Wal. Ah! the sermon which you all forgot, when the Marchioness of Misnia came suddenly? I heard that war had been proclaimed on that score; but what terms of peace were concluded?

Isen. Terms of peace! Do you call it peace to be delivered over to his nuns' tender mercies, myself and Guta, as well as our lady, — as if we had been bond-slaves and blackamoors?

Wal. You need not have submitted.

Isen. What! could I bear to see my poor child wandering up and down, wringing her hands like a mad woman — I who have lived for no one else this sixteen years? Guta talked sentiment — called it a glorious cross, and so forth. — I took it as it came.

Wal. And got no quarter, I 'll warrant.

Isen. Don't talk of it — my poor back tingles at the thought.

Wal. The sweet Saints think every woman of the world no better than she should be; and without meaning to be envious, owe you all a grudge for past flirtations. As I am a knight, now it 's over, I like you all the better for it.

Isen. What?

Wal. When I see a woman who will stand by her word, and two who will stand by their mistress. And the monk, too — there 's mettle in him. I took him for a canting carpet-haunter; but be sure, the man who will bully his own patrons has an honest purpose in him, though it bears strange fruit on this wicked hither-side of the grave. Now, my fair nymph of the birchen-tree, use your interest to find me supper and lodging; for your elegant squires of the trencher look surly on me here: I am the prophet who has no honor in his own country. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VI

Dawn. A rocky path leading to a mountain Chapel. A Peasant sitting on a stone with dog and cross-bow.

Peasant (*singing*).

Over the wild moor, in reddest dawn of morning,
Gaily the huntsman down green droves must roam:
Over the wild moor, in grayest wane of evening,
Weary the huntsman comes wandering home;
Home, home,
If he has one. Who comes here?

[*A Woodcutter enters with a laden ass.*]

What art going about?

Woodcutter. To warm other folks' backs.

Peas. Thou art in the common lot — Jack earns and Jill spends — therein lies the true division of labor. What 's thy name?

Woodc. Be'est a keeper, man, or a charmer, that dost so catechise me?

Peas. Both — I am a keeper, for I keep all I catch; and a charmer, for I drive bad spirits out of honest men's turnips.

Woodc. Mary sain us, what be they like?

Peas. Four-legged kitchens of leather, cooking farmers' crops into butcher's meat by night, without leave or license.

Woodc. By token, thou 'rt a deer stealer?

Peas. Stealer, quoth he? I have dominion. I do what I like with mine own.

Woodc. Thine own?

Peas. Yea, marry — for, saith the priest, man

has dominion over the beast of the field and the fowl of the air: so I, being as I am a man, as men go, have dominion over the deer in my trade, as you have in yours over sleepmice and woodpeckers.

Woodc. Then every man has a right to be a poacher.

Peas. Every man has his gift, and the tools go to him that can use them. Some are born workmen; some have souls above work. I'm one of that metal. I was meant to own land, and do nothing; but the angel that deals out babies' souls, mistook the cradles, and spoilt a gallant gentleman! Well — I forgive him! there were many born the same night — and work wears the wits.

Woodc. I had sooner draw in a yoke than hunt in a halter. Hadst best repent and mend thy ways.

Peas. The way-warden may do that: I wear out no ways, I go across country. Mend! saith he? Why I can but starve at worst, or groan with the rheumatism, which you do already. And who would reek and wallow o' nights in the same straw, like a stalled cow, when he may have his choice of all the clean holly bushes in the forest? Who would grub out his life in the same croft, when he has free-warren of all fields between this and Rhine? Not I. I have dirtied my share of spades myself; but I slipped my leash and went self-hunting.

Woodc. But what if thou be caught and brought up before the Prince?

Peas. He don't care for game. He has put down his kennel, and keeps a tame saint instead:

and when I am driven in, I shall ask my pardon of her in St. John's name. They say that for his sake she 'll give away the shoes off her feet.

Woodc. I would not stand in your shoes for all the top and lop in the forest. Murder! Here comes a ghost! Run up the bank — shove the jackass into the ditch.

[*A white figure comes up the path with lights.*]

Peas. A ghost or a watchman, and one 's as bad as the other — so we may take to cover for the time.

ELIZABETH *enters, meanly clad, carrying her new-born infant;* ISENTRUDIS *following with a taper and gold pieces on a salver.* ELIZABETH *passes, singing.*

Deep in the warm vale the village is sleeping,
Sleeping the firs on the bleak rock above;
Nought wakes, save grateful hearts, silently creeping
Up to the Lord in the might of their love.

What Thou hast given to me, Lord, here I bring Thee,
Odor, and light, and the magic of gold;
Feet which must follow Thee, lips which must sing Thee,
Limbs which must ache for Thee ere they grow old.

What Thou hast given to me, Lord, here I tender,
Life of mine own life, the fruit of my love;
Take him, yet leave him me, till I shall render
Count of the precious charge, kneeling above.

[*They pass up the path. The Peasants come out.*]

Peas. No ghost, but a mighty pretty wench, with a mighty sweet voice.

Woodc. Wench, indeed? Where be thy manners? 'T is her Ladyship — the Princess.

Peas. The Princess! Ay, I thought those little white feet were but lately out of broadcloth— still, I say, a mighty sweet voice — I wish she had not sung so sweetly — it makes things to arise in a body's head, does that singing: a wonderful handsome lady! a royal lady!

Woodc. But a most unwise one. Did ye mind the gold? If I had such a trencher full, it should sleep warm in a stocking, instead of being made a brother to owls here, for every rogue to snatch at.

Peas. Why, then? who dare harm such as her, man?

Woodc. Nay, nay, none of us, we are poor folks, we fear God and the king. But if she had met a gentleman now — heaven help her! Ah! thou hast lost a chance — thou might'st have run out promiscuously, and down on thy knees, and begged thy pardon for the newcomer's sake. There was a chance, indeed.

Peas. Pooh, man, I have done nothing but lose chances all my days. I fell into the fire the day I was christened, and ever since I am like a fresh-trimmed fir-tree; every foul feather sticks to me.

Woodc. Go, shrive thyself, and the priest will scrub off thy turpentine with a new hair-cloth; and now, good-day, the maids are a-waiting for their firewood.

Peas. A word before you go — Take warning by me — avoid that same serpent, wisdom — Pray to the Saints to make you a blockhead — Never send your boys to school — For Heaven knows, a

poor man that will live honest, and die in his bed, ought to have no more scholarship than a parson, and no more brains than your jackass.

Scene VII

The Gateway of a Castle. Elizabeth *and her suite standing at the top of a flight of steps. Mob below.*

Peasant. Bread! Bread! Bread! give us bread; we perish.

1st Voice. Ay, give, give, give! God knows, we 're long past earning.

2d Voice. Our skeleton children lie along in the roads —

3d Voice. Our sheep drop dead about the frozen leas —

4th Voice. Our harness and our shoes are boiled for food —

Old Man's Voice. Starved, withered, autumn hay that thanks the scythe!
Send out your swordsmen, mow the dry bents down,
And make this long death short — we 'll never struggle.

All. Bread! Bread!

Eliz. Ay, bread — Where is it, knights and servants?
Why, butler, seneschal, this food forthcomes not!

Butler. Alas, we 've eaten all ourselves; heaven knows
The pages broke the buttery hatches down —
The boys were starved almost.

Voice below. Ay, she can find enough to feast her minions.

Woman's Voice. How can she know what 't is, for months and months
To stoop and straddle in the clogging fallows,
Bearing about a living babe within you?
And then at night to fat yourself and it
On fir-bark, madam, and water.

Eliz. My good dame —
That which you bear, I bear: for food, God knows,
I have not tasted food this live-long day —
Nor will till you are served. I sent for wheat
From Köln and from the Rhine-land, days ago:
O God! why comes it not?

Enter from below, COUNT WALTER, *with a Merchant.*

Wal. Stand back; you 'll choke me, rascals:
Archers, bring up those mules. Here comes the corn —
Here comes your guardian angel, plenty-laden,
With no white wings, but good white wheat, my boys,
Quarters on quarters — if you 'll pay for it.

Eliz. Oh! give him all he asks.

Wal. The scoundrel wants
Three times its value.

Merchant. Not a penny less —
I bought it on speculation — I must live —
I get my bread by buying corn that 's cheap,
And selling where 't is dearest. Mass, you need it,
And you must pay according to your need.

Mob. Hang him! hang all regraters — hang the forestalling dog!

Wal. Driver, lend here the halter off that mule.
Eliz. Nay, Count; the corn is his, and his the right
To fix conditions for his own.
Mer. Well spoken!
A wise and royal lady! She will see
The trade protected. Why, I kept the corn
Three months on venture. Now, so help me Saints,
I am a loser by it, quite a loser —
So help me Saints, I am.
Eliz. You will not sell it
Save at a price which, by the bill you tender,
Is far beyond our means. Heaven knows, I grudge not —
I have sold my plate, have pawned my robes and jewels.
Mortgaged broad lands and castles to buy food —
And now I have no more. — Abate, or trust
Our honor for the difference.
Mer. Not a penny —
I trust no nobles. I must make my profit —
I 'll have my price, or take it back again.
Eliz. Most miserable, cold, short-sighted man,
Who for thy selfish gains dost welcome make
God's wrath, and battenest on thy fellows' woes,
What? wilt thou turn from heaven's gate, open to thee,
Through which thy charity may passport be,
And win thy long greed's pardon? Oh, for once
Dare to be great; show mercy to thyself!
See how that boiling sea of human heads
Waits open-mouthed to bless thee: speak the word,
And their triumphant quire of jubilation

Shall pierce God's cloudy floor with praise and prayers,
And drown the accuser's count in angels' ears.

[*In the meantime* WALTER, etc., *have been throwing down the wheat to the Mob.*]

Mob. God bless the good Count! — Bless the holy Princess —
Hurrah for wheat — Hurrah for one full stomach.
Mer. Ah! that 's my wheat! treason, my wheat, my money!
Eliz. Where is the wretch's wheat?
Wal. Below, my lady;
We counted on the charm of your sweet words,
And so did for him what, your sermon ended,
He would have done himself.
Knight. 'T were rude to doubt it.
Mer. Ye rascal barons!
What! Are we burghers monkeys for your pastime?
We 'll clear the odds. [*Seizes* WALTER.
Wal. Soft, friend — a worm will turn.
Voices below. Throw him down!
Wal. Dost hear that, friend?
Those pups are keen-toothed; they have eat of late
Worse bacon to their bread than thee. Come, come,
Put up thy knife; we 'll give thee market-price —
And if thou must have more — why, take it out
In board and lodging in the castle dungeon.

[WALTER *leads him out; the Mob*, etc., *disperse.*]

Eliz. Now then — there 's many a one lies faint at home —
I 'll go to them myself.

Isen. What now? start forth
In this most bitter frost, so thinly clad?
Eliz. Tut, tut, I wear my working dress to-day,
And those who work, robe lightly —
Isen. Nay, my child,
For once keep up your rank.
Eliz. Then I had best
Roll to their door in lackeyed equipage,
And dole my halfpence from my satin purse —
I am their sister — I must look like one.
I am their queen — I'll prove myself the greatest
By being the minister of all. So come —
Now to my pastime. (*aside*) And in happy toil
Forget this whirl of doubt — We are weak, we are weak,
Only when still: put thou thine hand to the plough,
The spirit drives thee on.
Isen. You live too fast!
Eliz. Too fast? We live too slow — our gummy blood
Without fresh purging airs from heaven, would choke
Slower and slower, till it stopped and froze.
God! fight we not within a cursed world,
Whose very air teems thick with leagued fiends —
Each word we speak has infinite effects —
Each soul we pass must go to heaven or hell —
And this our one chance through eternity
To drop and die, like dead leaves in the brake,
Or like the meteor stone, though whelmed itself,
Kindle the dry moors into fruitful blaze —
And yet we live too fast!
Be earnest, earnest, earnest; mad, if thou wilt:
Do what thou dost as if the stake were heaven,

And that thy last deed ere the judgment-day.
When all's done, nothing's done. There's rest above —
Below let work be death, if work be love! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII

A Chamber in the Castle. Counts WALTER, HUGO, etc., *Abbot, and Knights.*

Count Hugo. I can't forget it, as I am a Christian man. To ask for a stoup of beer at breakfast, and be told there was no beer allowed in the house — her ladyship had given all the malt to the poor.

Abbot. To give away the staff of life, eh?

C. Hugo. The life itself, Sir, the life itself. All that barley, that would have warmed many an honest fellow's coppers, wasted in filthy cakes.

Abbot. The parent of seraphic ale degraded into plebeian dough! Indeed, Sir, we have no right to lessen wantonly the amount of human enjoyment.

C. Wal. In Heaven's name, what would you have her do, while the people were eating grass?

C. Hugo. Nobody asked them to eat it; nobody asked them to be there to eat it; if they will breed like rabbits, let them feed like rabbits, say I — I never married till I could keep a wife.

Abbot. Ah, Count Walter! How sad to see a man of your sense so led away by his feelings! Had but this dispensation been left to work itself out, and evolve the blessing implicit in all Heaven's chastenings! Had but the stern benevolences of providence remained undisturbed by her ladyship's carnal tenderness — what a boon had this famine been!

C. Wal. How then, man?

Abbot. How many a poor soul would be lying — Ah, blessed thought! — in Abraham's bosom; who must now toil on still in this vale of tears! — Pardon this pathetic dew — I cannot but feel as a churchman.

3d Count. Look at it in this way, Sir. There are too many of us — too many — Where you have one job you have three workmen. Why, I threw three hundred acres into pasture myself this year — it saves money, and risk, and trouble, and tithes.

C. Wal. What would you say to the Princess, who talks of breaking up all her parks to wheat next year?

3d Count. Ask her to take on the thirty families, who were just going to tramp off those three hundred acres into the Rhine-land, if she had not kept them in both senses this winter, and left them on my hands — once beggars, always beggars.

C. Hugo. Well, I 'm a practical man, and I say, the sharper the famine, the higher are prices, and the higher I sell, the more I can spend; so the money circulates, Sir, that 's the word — like water — sure to run downwards again; and so it 's as broad as it 's long; and here's a health — if there was any beer — to the farmers' friends, "A bloody war and a wet harvest."

Abbot. Strongly put, though correctly. For the self-interest of each it is which produces in the aggregate the happy equilibrium of all.

C. Wal. Well — the world is right well made, that 's certain; and He who made the Jews' sin our salvation may bring plenty out of famine, and comfort out of covetousness. But look you, Sirs, private selfishness may be public weal, and yet

private selfishness be just as surely damned, for all that.

3d Count. I hold, Sir, that every alms is a fresh badge of slavery.

C. Wal. I don't deny it.

3d Count. Then teach them independence.

C. Wal. How? By tempting them to turn thieves, when begging fails? By keeping their stomachs just at desperation-point? By starving them out here, to march off, starving all the way, to some town, in search of employment, of which, if they find it, they know no more than my horse? Likely! No, Sir, to make men of them, put them not out of the reach, but out of the need, of charity.

3d Count. And how, prithee? By teaching them, like our fair Landgravine, to open their mouth for all that drops? Thuringia is become a kennel of beggars in her hands.

C. Wal. In hers? In ours, Sir!

Abbot. Idleness, Sir, deceit, and immorality, are the three children of this same barbarous self-indulgence in almsgiving. Leave the poor alone. Let want teach them the need of self-exertion, and misery prove the foolishness of crime.

C. Wal. How? Teach them to become men by leaving them brutes?

Abbot. Oh, Sir, there we step in, with the consolations and instructions of the faith.

C. Wal. Ay, but while the grass is growing the steed is starving; and in the meantime, how will the callow chick Grace, stand against the tough old game-cock Hunger?

3d Count. Then how, in the name of patience, would you have us alter things?

C. Wal. We cannot alter them, Sir — but they will be altered, never fear.

Omnes. How? How?

C. Wal. Do you see this hour-glass? — Here's the state: This air stands for the idlers; — this sand for the workers. When all the sand has run to the bottom, God in heaven just turns the hour-glass, and then —

C. Hugo. The world's upside down.

C. Wal. And the Lord have mercy upon us!

Omnes. On us? Do you call us the idlers?

C. Wal. Some dare to do so — But fear not — In the fulness of time, all that's lightest is sure to come to the top again.

C. Hugo. But what rascal calls us idlers?

Omnes. Name, name.

C. Wal. Why, if you ask me — I heard a shrewd sermon the other day on that same idleness and immorality text of the Abbot's. — 'T was Conrad, the Princess' director, preached it. And a fashionable cap it is, though it will fit more than will like to wear it. Shall I give it you? Shall I preach?

C. Hugo. A tub for Varila! Stand on the table, now, toss back thy hood like any Franciscan, and preach away.

C. Wal. Idleness, quoth he (Conrad, mind you), — idleness and immorality? Where have they learnt them, but from your nobles? There was a saucy monk, for you. But there's worse coming. Religion? said he, how can they respect it, when they see you, "Their betters," fattening on church lands, neglecting sacraments, defying excommunications, trading in benefices, hiring the clergy for your puppets and flatterers, making the ministry, the episcopate itself, a lumber-room wherein to

stow away the idiots and spendthrifts of your families, the confidants of your mistresses, the cast-off pedagogues of your boys?

Omnes. The scoundrel!

C. Wal. Was he not? — But hear again — Immorality? roars he; and who has corrupted them but you? Have not you made every castle a weed-bed, from which the newest corruptions of the Court stick like thistle-down, about the empty heads of stable-boys and serving-maids? Have you not kept the poor worse housed than your dogs and your horses, worse fed than your pigs and your sheep? Is there an ancient house among you, again, of which village gossips do not whisper some dark story of lust and oppression, of decrepit debauchery, of hereditary doom?

Omnes. We 'll hang this monk.

C. Wal. Hear me out, and you 'll burn him. His sermon was like a hailstorm, the tail of the shower the sharpest. Idleness? he asked next of us all: how will they work, when they see you landlords sitting idle above them, in a fool's paradise of luxury and riot, never looking down but to squeeze from them an extra drop of honey — like sheep-boys stuffing themselves with blackberries while the sheep are licking up flukes in every ditch? And now you wish to leave the poor man in the slough, whither your neglect and your example have betrayed him, and made his too apt scholarship the excuse for your own remorseless greed! As a Christian, I am ashamed of you all; as a churchman, doubly ashamed of those prelates, hired stalking-horses of the rich, who would fain gloss over their own sloth and cowardice with the wisdom which cometh not from

above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; aping the artless cant of an aristocracy who made them — use them — and despise them. That was his sermon.

Abbot. Paul and Barnabas! What an outpouring of the spirit! — Were not his hoodship the Pope's legate, now — accidents might happen to him, going home at night; eh, Sir Hugo?

C. Hugo. If he would but come my way!

For "the mule it was slow, and the lane it was dark,
When out of the copse leapt a gallant young spark.
Says, 'T is not for nought you 've been begging all day:
So remember your toll, since you travel our way."

Abbot. Hush! Here comes the Landgrave.

LEWIS *enters.*

Lewis. Good morrow, gentles. Why so warm, Count Walter?
Your blessing, Father Abbot: what deep matters
Have called our worships to this conference?

C. Hugo (*aside*). Up, Count; you are spokesman.

3*d Count.* Exalted Prince,
Whose peerless knighthood, like the remeant sun,
After too long a night, regilds our clay,
Late silvered by the reflex lunar beams
Of your celestial lady's matron graces —

Abbot (*aside*). *Ut vinum optimum amati mei*
Dulciter descendens!

3*d Count.* Think not we mean to praise or disapprove —
The acts of saintly souls must only plead

In foro conscientiæ: grosser minds,
Whose humbler aim is but the public weal,
Know of no mesh which holds them: yet, great Prince,
Some dare not see their sovereign's strength postponed
To private grace, and sigh, that generous hearts,
And ladies' tenderness, too oft forgetting
That wisdom is the highest charity,
Will interfere, in pardonable haste,
With Heaven's stern providence.

Lewis. We see your drift.
Go, sirrah (*to a Page*); pray the Princess to illumine
Our conclave with her beauties. 'T is our manner
To hear no cause, of gentle or of simple,
Unless the accused and the accuser both
Meet face to face.

3d Count. Excuse, High-mightiness, —
We bring no accusation; facts, your Highness,
Wait for your sentence, not our *præjudicium.*

Lewis. Give us the facts, then, sir; in the lady's presence,
Her nearness to ourselves — perchance her reasons —
May make them somewhat dazzling.

Abbot. Nay, my Lord;
I, as a Churchman, though with these your nobles
Both in commission and opinion one,
Am yet most loth, my Lord, to set my seal
To aught which this harsh world might call complaint
Against a princely saint — a chosen vessel —
An argosy celestial — in whom error
Is but the young luxuriance of her grace.

The Count of Varila, as bound to neither,
For both shall speak, and all which late has passed
Upon the matter of this famine open.

C. Wal. Why, if I must speak out — then I'll confess
To have stood by, and seen the Landgravine
Do most strange deeds; and in her generation
Show no more wit than other babes of light.
First, she has given away, to starving rascals,
The stores of grain she might have sold, good lack!
For any price she asked; has pawned your jewels,
And mortgaged sundry farms, and all for food.
Has sunk vast sums in fever-hospitals,
For rogues whom famine sickened — almhouses
For sluts whose husbands died — schools for their brats.
Most sad vagaries! but there's worse to come.
The dulness of the Court has ruined trade:
The jewellers and clothiers don't come near us;
The semptresses, my Lord, and pastrycooks
Have quite forgot their craft; she has turned all heads,
And made the ladies starve, and wear old clothes,
And run about with her to nurse the sick,
Instead of putting gold in circulation
By balls, sham-fights, and dinners; 't is most sad, sir,
But she has swept your treasury out as clean —
As was the widow's cruse, who fed Elijah.

Lewis. Ruined, no doubt! Lo! here the culprit comes.

ELIZABETH *enters.*

Come hither, dearest. These, my knights and nobles,

Lament your late unthrift (your conscience speaks
The causes of their blame); and wish you warned,
As wisdom is the highest charity,
No more to interfere, from private feeling,
With Heaven's stern laws, or maim the sovereign's wealth,
To save superfluous villains' worthless lives.

Eliz. Lewis!

Lewis. Not I, fair, but my counsellors,
In courtesy, need some reply.

Eliz. My Lords;
Doubtless, you speak as your duty bids you:
I know you love my husband: do you think
My love is less than yours? 'T was for his honor
I dare not lose a single silly sheep
Of all the flock which God had trusted to him.
True, I had hoped by this — No matter what —
Since to your sense it bears a different hue.
I keep no logic. For my gifts, thank God,
They cannot be recalled; for those poor souls,
My pensioners — even for my husband's knightly name,
Oh! ask not back that slender loan of comfort
My folly has procured them: if, my Lords,
My public censure, or disgraceful penance
May expiate, and yet confirm my waste,
I offer this poor body to the buffets
Of sternest justice: when I dared not spare
My husband's lands, I dare not spare myself.

Lewis. No! no!—My noble sister? What? my Lords!
If her love move you not, her wisdom may.
She knows a deeper statecraft, sirs, than you:
She will not throw away the substance, Abbot,
To save the accident; waste living souls

To keep, or hope to keep, the means of life.
Our wisdom and our swords may fill our coffers,
But will they breed us men, my Lords, or mothers?
God blesses in the camp a noble rashness:
Then why not in the storehouse? He that lends
To Him, need never fear to lose his venture.
Spend on, my Queen. You will not sell my castles?
Nay, you must leave us Neuburg, love, and Wartburg.
Their worn old stones will hardly pay the carriage,
And foreign foes may pay untimely visits.

C. Wal. And home foes, too: if these philosophers
Put up the curb, my Lord, a half-link tighter,
The scythes will be among our horses' legs
Before next harvest.

Lewis. Fear not for our welfare:
We have a guardian here, well skilled to keep
Peace for our seneschal, while angels, stooping
To catch the tears she sheds for us in absence,
Will sain us from the roaming adversary
With scents of Paradise. Farewell, my Lords.

Eliz. Nay, — I must pray your knighthoods — You must honor
Our dais and bower as private guests to-day.
Thanks for your gentle warning; may my weakness
To such a sin be never tempted more!

[*Exeunt* ELIZABETH *and* LEWIS.

C. Wal. Thus, as if virtue were not its own reward, is it paid over and above with beef and ale? Weep not, tender-hearted Count! Though "generous hearts," my Lord, "and ladies' tenderness, too oft forget" — Truly spoken! Lord Abbot, does not your spiritual eye discern coals of fire on Count Hugo's head?

C. Hugo. Where, and a plague? Where?

C. Wal. Nay, I speak mystically, — there is nought there but what beer will quench before nightfall. Here, peeping rabbit (*to a Page at the door*), out of your burrow, and show these gentles to their lodgings. We will meet at the *gratias*.

[*They go out.*

C. Wal. (*alone*). Well: — if Hugo is a brute, he at least makes no secret of it. He is an old boar, and honest; he wears his tushes outside, for a warning to all men. But for the rest! — Whited sepulchres! and not one of them but has half persuaded himself of his own benevolence. Of all cruelties, save me from your small pedant, — your closet philosopher, who has just courage enough to bestride his theory, without wit to see whither it will carry him. In experience — a child: in obstinacy, a woman: in nothing a man, but in logic-chopping: instead of God's grace, a few school-boy saws about benevolence, and industry, and independence — there is his metal. If the world will be mended on his principles, well. If not, poor world! — but principles must be carried out, though through blood and famine: for truly, man was made for theories, not theories for man. A doctrine is these men's God — touch but that shrine, and lo! your simpering philanthropist becomes as ruthless as a Dominican.

[*Exit.*

Scene IX

Elizabeth's *Bower.* Elizabeth *and* Lewis *sitting together.*

SONG

Eliz. Oh! that we two were Maying
Down the stream of the soft spring breeze;
Like children with violets playing
In the shade of the whispering trees.

Oh! that we two sat dreaming
On the sward of some sheep-trimmed down
Watching the white mist steaming
Over river and mead and town.

Oh! that we two lay sleeping
In our nest in the churchyard sod,
With our limbs at rest on the quiet earth's breast,
And our souls at home with God!

Lewis. Ah, turn away those swarthy diamonds' blaze!
Mine eyes are dizzy, and my faint sense reels
In the rich fragrance of those purple tresses.
Oh, to be thus, and thus, day after day!
To sleep, and wake, and find it yet no dream —
My atmosphere, my hourly food, such bliss
As to have dreamt of, five short years agone,
Had seemed a mad conceit.
Eliz. Five years agone?
Lewis. I know not; for upon our marriage-day
I slipped from time into eternity;
Where each day teems with centuries of life,
And centuries were but one wedding morn.

Eliz. Lewis, I am too happy! floating higher
Than e'er my will had dared to soar, though able;
But circumstance, which is the will of God,
Beguiled my cowardice to that, which, daring,
I found most natural, when I feared it most.
Love would have had no strangeness in mine eyes,
Save from the prejudice which others taught me —
They should know best. Yet now this wedlock seems
A second infancy's baptismal robe,
A heaven, my spirit's antenatal home,
Lost in blind pining girlhood — found now, found!
(*Aside*) What have I said? Do I blaspheme? Alas!
I neither made these thoughts, nor can unmake them.

Lewis. Ay, marriage is the life-long miracle,
The self-begetting wonder, daily fresh;
The Eden, where the spirit and the flesh
Are one again, and new-born souls walk free,
And name in mystic language all things new,
Naked, and not ashamed. [ELIZ. *hides her face.*

Eliz. Oh! God! were that true!
[*Clasps him round the neck.*
There, there, no more —
I love thee, and I love thee, and I love thee —
More than rich thoughts can dream, or mad lips speak;
But how, or why, whether with soul or body,
I will not know. Thou art mine. — Why question further?
(*Aside*) Ay if I fall by loving, I will love,
And be degraded! — how? by my own troth-plight?

No, but by thinking that I fall. — 'T is written
That whatsoe'er is not of faith is sin. —
Oh! Jesu Lord! Hast Thou not made me thus?
Mercy! My brain will burst: I cannot leave him!

Lewis. Beloved, if I went away to war —

Eliz. Oh, God! More wars? More partings?

Lewis. Nay, my sister —
My trust but longs to glory in its surety:
What would'st thou do?

Eliz. What I have done already.
Have I not followed thee, through drought and frost,
Through flooded swamps, rough glens, and wasted lands,
Even while I panted most with thy dear loan
Of double life?

Lewis. My saint! but what if I bid thee
To be my seneschal, and here with prayers,
With sober thrift, and noble bounty shine,
Alone and peerless? And suppose — nay, start not —
I only said suppose — the war was long,
Our camps far off, and that some winter, love,
Or two, pent back this Eden stream, where now
Joys upon joys like sunlit ripples pass,
Alike, yet ever new. — What would'st thou do, love?

Eliz. A year? A year! A cold, blank, widowed year!
Strange, that mere words should chill my heart with fear —
This is no hall of doom,
No impious Soldan's feast of old,
Where o'er the madness of the foaming gold,
A fleshless hand its woe on tainted walls enrolled.

Yet by thy wild words raised,
In Love's most careless revel,
Looms through the future's fog a shade of evil,
And all my heart is glazed.—
Alas! What would I do?
I would lie down and weep, and weep,
Till the salt current of my tears should sweep
My soul, like floating weed, adown a fitful sleep,
A lingering half-night through.
Then when the mocking bells did wake
My hollow eyes to twilight gray,
I would address my spiritless limbs to pray,
And nerve myself with stripes to meet the weary day,
And labor for thy sake.
Until by vigils, fasts, and tears,
The flesh was grown so spare and light,
That I could slip its mesh, and flit by night
O'er sleeping sea and land to thee — or Christ — till morning light.
Peace! Why these fears?
Life is too short for mean anxieties:
Soul! thou must work, though blindfold.
Come, beloved,
I must turn robber. —I have begged of late
So soft, I fear to ask. — Give me thy purse.

Lewis. No, not my purse: — stay — Where is all that gold
I gave you, when the Jews came here from Köln?

Eliz. Oh, those few coins? I spent them all next day
On a new chapel on the Eisenthal;
There were no choristers but nightingales —
No teachers there save bees: how long is this?
Have you turned niggard?

Lewis. Nay; go ask my steward —
Take what you will — this purse I want myself.
Eliz. Ah! now I guess. You have some trinket for me —
You promised late to buy no more such baubles —
And now you are ashamed. — Nay, I must see —

[*Snatches his purse.* LEWIS *hides his face.*

Ah, God! what 's here? A new crusader's cross?
Whose? Nay, nay — turn not from me; I guess all —
You need not tell me; it is very well —
According to the meed of my deserts:
Yes — very well.
Lewis. Ah! love — look not so calm —
Eliz. Fear not — I shall weep soon.
How long is it since you vowed?
Lewis. A week or more.
Eliz. Brave heart! And all that time your tenderness
Kept silence, knowing my weak foolish soul.
[*Weeps.*
Oh, love! Oh, life! Late found, and soon, soon lost!
A bleak sunrise, — a treacherous morning gleam, —
And now, ere mid-day, all my sky is black
With whirling drifts once more! The march is fixed
For this day month, is 't not?
Lewis. Alas, too true!
Eliz. O break not, heart!

CONRAD *enters.*

Ah! here my master comes.
No weeping before him.

Lewis. Speak to the holy man:
He can give strength and comfort, which poor I
Need even more than you. Here, saintly master,
I leave her to your holy eloquence. Farewell!
God help us both! [*Exit* LEWIS.

Eliz. (*rising*). You know, sir, that my husband has taken the cross!

Con. I do; all praise to God!

Eliz. But none to you:
Hard-hearted! Am I not enough your slave?
Can I obey you more when he is gone
Than now I do? Wherein, pray, has he hindered
This holiness of mine, for which you make me
Old ere my womanhood? [CONRAD *offers to go.*
Stay, Sir, and tell me
Is this the outcome of your "father's care"?
Was it not enough to poison all my joys
With foulest scruples? — show me nameless sins,
Where I, unconscious babe, blessed God for all things,
But you must thus intrigue away my knight
And plunge me down this gulf of widowhood!
And I not twenty yet — a girl — an orphan —
That cannot stand alone! Was I too happy?
Oh, God! what lawful bliss do I not buy
And balance with the smart of some sharp penance?
Hast thou no pity? None? Thou drivest me
To fiendish doubts: Thou, Jesus' messenger?

Con. This to your master!

Eliz. This to any one
Who dares to part me from my love.

Con. 'T is well —
In pity to your weakness I must deign
To do what ne'er I did — excuse myself.

I say, I knew not of your husband's purpose;
God's spirit, not I, moved him: perhaps I sinned
In that I did not urge it myself.

Eliz. Thou traitor!
So thou would'st part us?

Con. Aught that makes thee greater
I 'll dare. This very outburst proves in thee
Passions unsanctified, and carnal leanings
Upon the creatures thou would'st fain transcend.
Thou badest me cure thy weakness. Lo, God brings thee
The tonic cup I feared to mix: — be brave —
Drink it to the lees, and thou shalt find within
A pearl of price.

Eliz. 'T is bitter!

Con. Bitter, truly:
Even I, to whom the storm of earthly love
Is but a dim remembrance — Courage! Courage!
There 's glory in 't; fulfil thy sacrifice;
Give up thy noblest on the noblest service
God's sun has looked on, since the chosen twelve
Went conquering, and to conquer, forth. If he fall —

Eliz. Oh, spare mine ears!

Con. He falls a blessed martyr,
To bid thee welcome through the gates of pearl;
And next to his shall thine own guerdon be
If thou devote him willing to thy God.
Wilt thou?

Eliz. Have mercy!

Con. Wilt thou? Sit not thus
Watching the sightless air: no angel in it
But asks thee what I ask: the fiend alone
Delays thy coward flesh. Wilt thou devote him?

Eliz. I will devote him; — a crusader's wife!

I'll glory in it. Thou speakest words from God —
And God shall have him! Go now — good, my master;
My poor brain swims. [*Exit* CONRAD.
Yes — a crusader's wife!
And a crusader's widow!
[*Bursts into tears, and dashes herself on the floor.*

SCENE X

A Street in the Town of Schmalcald. Bodies of Crusading Troops defiling past. LEWIS *and* ELIZABETH *with their Suite in the foreground.*

Lewis. Alas! the time is near; I must be gone —
There are our liegemen; how you'll welcome us,
Returned in triumph, bowed with paynim spoils,
Beneath the victor cross, to part no more!
Eliz. Yes — we shall part no more, where next we meet.
Enough to have stood here once on such an errand!
Lewis. The bugle calls. — Farewell, my love, my lady,
Queen, sister, saint! One last long kiss — Farewell!
Eliz. One kiss — and then another — and another —
Till 't is too late to go — and so return —
Oh God! forgive that craven thought! There, take him
Since Thou dost need him. I have kept him ever
Thine, when most mine; and shall I now deny Thee?

Oh! go — yes, go — Thou 'lt not forget to pray,
[LEWIS *goes.*
With me, at our old hour? Alas! he 's gone
And lost — thank God he hears me not — for ever.
Why look'st thou so, poor girl? I say, for ever.
The day I found the bitter blessed cross,
Something did strike my heart like keen cold steel,
Which quarries daily there with dead dull pains —
Whereby I know that we shall meet no more.
Come! Home, maids, home! Prepare me widow's weeds —
For he is dead to me, and I must soon
Die too to him, and many things; and mark me —
Breathe not his name, lest this love-pampered heart
Should sicken to vain yearnings — Lost! lost! lost!

Lady. Oh stay, and watch this pomp.

Eliz. Well said — we 'll stay; so this bright enterprise
Shall blanch our private clouds, and steep our soul
Drunk with the spirit of great Christendom.

CRUSADER CHORUS.

[*Men-at-Arms pass, singing.*]

The tomb of God before us,
Our fatherland behind,
Our ships shall leap o'er billows steep,
Before a charmed wind.

Above our van great angels
Shall fight along the sky;
While martyrs pure and crowned saints
To God for rescue cry.

The red-cross knights and yeomen
Throughout the holy town,
In faith and might, on left and right,
Shall tread the paynim down.

Till on the Mount Moriah
The Pope of Rome shall stand;
The Kaiser and the King of France
Shall guard him on each hand.

There shall he rule all nations,
With crozier and with sword;
And pour on all the heathen,
The wrath of Christ the Lord.

[*Women — bystanders.*]

Christ is a rock in the bare salt land,
To shelter our knights from the sun and sand:
Christ the Lord is a summer sun,
To ripen the grain while they are gone.

Then you who fight in the bare salt land,
And you who work at home,
Fight and work for Christ the Lord,
Until His kingdom come.

[*Old Knights pass.*]

Our stormy sun is sinking;
Our sands are running low;
In one fair fight, before the night,
Our hard-worn hearts shall glow.

We cannot pine in cloister;
We cannot fast and pray;
The sword which built our load of guilt
Must wipe that guilt away.

We know the doom before us;
The dangers of the road;
Have mercy, mercy, Jesu blest,
When we lie low in blood.

When we lie gashed and gory,
The holy walls within,
Sweet Jesu, think upon our end,
And wipe away our sin.

[*Boy Crusaders pass.*]

The Christ-child sits on high:
He looks through the merry blue sky;
He holds in His hand a bright lily-band,
For the boys who for Him die.

On holy Mary's arm,
Wrapt safe from terror and harm,
Lulled by the breeze in the paradise trees,
Their souls sleep soft and warm.

Knight David, young and true,
The giant Soldan slew,
And our arms so light, for the Christ-child's right,
Like noble deeds can do.

[*Young Knights pass.*]

The rich East blooms fragrant before us;
All Fairy-land beckons us forth;
We must follow the crane in her flight o'er the main,
From the frosts and the moors of the North.

Our sires in the youth of the nations
Swept westward through plunder and blood,
But a holier quest calls us back to the East,
We fight for the kingdom of God.

Then shrink not, and sigh not, fair ladies,
The red cross which flames on each arm and each shield,
Through philtre and spell, and the black charms of hell,
Shall shelter our true love in camp and in field.

[*Old Monk, looking after them.*]

Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
The burying place of God!
Why gay and bold, in steel and gold,
O'er the paths where Christ hath trod?

[*The Scene closes*

ACT III

SCENE I

A Chamber in the Wartburg. ELIZABETH *sitting in Widow's weeds;* GUTA *and* ISENTRUDIS *by her.*

Isen. What? Always thus, my Princess? Is this wise,
By day with fasts and ceaseless coil of labor;
About the ungracious poor — hands, eyes, feet, brain,
O'ertasked alike — 'mid sin and filth, which make
Each sense a plague — by night with cruel stripes,
And weary watchings on the freezing stone,
To double all your griefs, and burn life's candle,
As village gossips say, at either end?
The good book bids the heavy-hearted drink,
And so forget their woe.
Eliz. 'T is written too
In that same book, nurse, that the days shall come
When the bridegroom shall be taken away — and then —
Then shall they mourn and fast: I needed weaning
From sense and earthly joys; by this way only
May I win God to leave in mine own hands
My luxury's cure: Oh! I may bring him back,
By working out to its full depth the chastening
The need of which his loss proves: I but barter
Less grief for greater — pain for widowhood.

Isen. And death for life — your cheeks are wan and sharp
As any three-days' moon — you are shifting always
Uneasily and stiff, now, on your seat,
As from some secret pain.
Eliz. Why watch me thus?
You cannot know — and yet you know too much —
I tell you, nurse, pain 's comfort, when the flesh
Aches with the aching soul in harmony,
And even in woe, we are one: the heart must speak
Its passion's strangeness in strange symbols out,
Or boil, till it bursts inly.
Guta. Yet, methinks,
You might have made this widowed solitude
A holy rest — a spell of soft gray weather,
Beneath whose fragrant dews all tender thoughts
Might bud and burgeon.
Eliz. That 's a gentle dream;
But nature shows nought like it: every winter,
When the great sun has turned his face away,
The earth goes down into the vale of grief,
And fasts, and weeps, and shrouds herself in sables,
Leaving her wedding-garlands to decay —
Then leaps in spring to his returning kisses —
As I may yet! —
Isen. There, now — my foolish child!
You faint: come — come to your chamber —
Eliz. Oh, forgive me!
But hope at times throngs in so rich and full,
It mads the brain like wine: come with me, nurse,
Sit by me, lull me calm with gentle tales
Of noble ladies wandering in the wild wood,
Fed on chance earth-nuts, and wild strawberries,

Or milk of silly sheep, and woodland doe.
Or how fair Magdalen 'mid desert sands
Wore out in prayer her lonely blissful years,
Watched by bright angels, till her modest tresses
Wove to her pearled feet their golden shroud.
Come, open all your lore.

[SOPHIA *and* AGNES *enter.*]

My mother-in-law!
(*Aside*) Shame on thee, heart! why sink, whene'er we meet?
Soph. Daughter, we know of old thy strength, of metal
Beyond us worldlings: shrink not, if the time
Be come which needs its use —
Eliz. What means this preface? Ah! your looks are big
With sudden woes — speak out.
Soph. Be calm, and hear
The will of God toward my son, thy husband.
Eliz. What? is he captive? Why then — what of that?
There are friends will rescue him — there 's gold for ransom —
We 'll sell our castles — live in bowers of rushes —
Oh God! that I were with him in the dungeon!
Soph. He is not taken.
Eliz. No! he would have fought to the death!
There 's treachery! What paynim dog dare face
His lance, who naked braved yon lion's rage,
And eyed the cowering monster to his den?
Speak! Has he fled? or worse?
Soph. Child, he is dead.
Eliz. (*clasping her hands on her knees*). The world is dead to me, and all its smiles!

Isen. Oh, woe! my Prince! and doubly woe,
my daughter!

[ELIZABETH *springs up and rushes out.*

Oh, stop her — stop my child! She will go mad —
Dash herself down — Fly — Fly — She is not made
Of hard, light stuff, like you.

[ISENTRUDIS *and* GUTA *run out.*

Soph. I had expected some such passionate outbreak
At the first news: you see now, Lady Agnes,
These saints, who fain would "wean themselves from earth,"
Still yield to the affections they despise
When the game's earnest — Now — ere they return —
Your brother, child, is dead ——

Agnes. I know it too well.
So young — so brave — so blest! — And she — she loved him —
Oh! I repent of all the foolish scoffs
With which I crossed her.

Soph. Yes — the Landgrave's dead —
Attend to me — Alas! my son! my son!
He was my first-born! But he has a brother —
Agnes! we must not let this foreign gipsy,
Who, as you see, is scarce her own wits' mistress,
Flaunt sovereign over us, and our broad lands,
To my son's prejudice — There are barons, child,
Who will obey a knight, but not a saint:
I must at once to them.

Agnes. Oh, let me stay.

Soph. As you shall please — Your brother's landgravate
Is somewhat to you, surely — and your smiles

Are worth gold pieces in a court intrigue.
For her, on her own principles, a downfall
Is a chastening mercy — and a likely one.

Agnes. Oh! let me stay, and comfort her!

Soph. Romance!
You girls adore a scene — as lookers on.

[*Exit* SOPHIA.

Agnes (*alone*). Well spoke the old monks, peaceful watching life's turmoil,
"Eyes which look heavenward, weeping still we see:
God's love with keen flame purges, like the lightning flash,
Gold which is purest, purer still must be."

[GUTA *enters.*]

Alas! Returned alone! Where has my sister been?

Guta. Thank heaven you hear alone, for such sad sight would haunt
Henceforth your young hopes — crush your shuddering fancy down
With dread of like fierce anguish.
You saw her bound forth: we towards her bower in haste
Ran trembling: spell-bound there, before her bridal-bed
She stood, while wan smiles flickered, like the northern dawn,
Across her worn cheeks' ice-field; keenest memories then
Rushed with strong shudderings through her — as the winged shaft
Springs from the tense nerve, so her passion hurled her forth
Sweeping, like fierce ghost, on through hall and corridor,

Tearless, with wide eyes staring, while a ghastly wind
Moaned on through roof and rafter, and the empty helms
Along the walls rang clattering, and above her waved
Dead heroes' banners: swift and yet more swift she drove
Still seeking aimless; sheer against the opposing wall
At last dashed reckless — there with frantic fingers clutched
Blindly the ribbed oak, till that frost of rage
Dissolved itself in tears, and like a babe,
With inarticulate moans, and folded hands,
She followed those who led her, as if the sun
On her life's dial had gone back seven years,
And she were once again the dumb sad child
We knew her ere she married.

Isen. (*entering*). As after wolf, wolf presses, leaping through the snow-glades,
So woe on woe throngs surging up.

Guta. What? treason?

Isen. Treason, and of the foulest. From her state she's rudely thrust;
Her keys are seized; her weeping babies pent from her:
The wenches stop their sobs to sneer askance,
And greet their fallen censor's new mischance.

Agnes. Alas! Who dared to do this wrong?

Isen. Your mother and your mother's son —
Judge you, if it was knightly done.

Guta. See! see! she comes, with heaving breast,
With bursting eyes, and purpled brow:

Oh that the traitors saw her now!
They know not, sightless fools, the heart they break.

ELIZABETH *enters slowly.*

Eliz. He is in purgatory now! Alas!
Angels! be pitiful! deal gently with him!
His sins were gentle! That's one cause left for living —
To pray, and pray for him: why all these months
I prayed, — and here's my answer: Dead of a fever!
Why thus? so soon! Only six years for love!
While any formal, heartless matrimony,
Patched up by Court intrigues, and threats of cloisters,
Drags on for six times six, and peasant slaves
Grow old on the same straw, and hand in hand
Slip from life's oozy bank, to float at ease.
[*A knocking at the door.*
That's some petitioner.
Go to — I will not hear them: why should I work,
When he is dead? Alas! was that my sin?
Was he, not Christ, my lode-star? Why not warn me?
Too late! What's this foul dream? Dead at Otranto —
Parched by Italian suns — no woman by him —
He was too chaste! Nought but rude men to nurse! —
If I had been there, I should have watched by him —
Guessed every fancy — God! I might have saved him!
[*A servant-man bursts in.*
Servant. Madam, the Landgrave gave me strict commands —

Isen. The Landgrave, dolt?
Eliz. I might have saved him!
Servant (*to Isen.*). Ay, saucy madam! —
The Landgrave Henry, lord and master,
Freer than the last, and yet no waster,
Who will not stint a poor knave's beer,
Or spin out Lent through half the year.
Why — I see double!
Eliz. Who spoke there of the Landgrave?
What's this drunkard?
Give him his answer — 'T is no time for mumming —
Serv. The Landgrave Henry bade me see you out
Safe through his gates, and that at once, my Lady.
Come!
Eliz. Why — that's hasty — I must take my children —
Ah! I forgot — they would not let me see them.
I must pack up my jewels —
Serv. You'll not need it —
His lordship has the keys.
Eliz. He has indeed.
Why, man! — I am thy children's godmother —
I nursed thy wife myself in the black sickness —
Art thou a bird, that when the old tree falls,
Flits off, and sings in the sapling?
[*The man seizes her arm.*
Keep thine hands off —
I'll not be shamed — Lead on. Farewell, my Ladies.
Follow not! There's want to spare on earth already;
And mine own woe is weight enough for me.
Go back, and say, Elizabeth has yet

Eternal homes, built deep in poor men's hearts;
And, in the alleys underneath the wall,
Has bought with sinful mammon heavenly treasure,
More sure than adamant, purer than white whales' bone,
Which now she claims. Lead on: a people's love shall right me. [*Exit with Servant.*

Guta. Where now, dame?

Isen. Where, but after her?

Guta. True heart!
I'll follow to the death. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

A Street. Elizabeth *and* Guta *at the door of a Convent. Monks in the Porch.*

Eliz. You are afraid to shelter me — afraid.
And so you thrust me forth, to starve and freeze.
Soon said. Why palter o'er these mean excuses,
Which tempt me to despise you?

Monks. Ah! my lady,
We know your kindness — but we poor religious
Are bound to obey God's ordinance, and submit
Unto the powers that be, who have forbidden
All men, alas! to give you food or shelter.

Eliz. Silence! I'll go. Better in God's hand than man's.
He shall kill us, if we die. This bitter blast
Warping the leafless willows, yon white snow-storms,
Whose wings, like vengeful angels, cope the vault,
They are God's, — We'll trust to them.
[*Monks go in.*

Guta. Mean-spirited!
Fair frocks hide foul hearts. Why, their altar now
Is blazing with your gifts.
Eliz. How long their altar?
To God I gave — and God shall pay me back.
Fool! to have put my trust in living man,
And fancied that I bought God's love, by buying
The greedy thanks of these His earthly tools!
Well — here's one lesson learnt! I thank thee, Lord!
Henceforth I'll straight to Thee, and to Thy poor.
What? Isentrudis not returned? Alas!
Where are those children?
They will not have the heart to keep them from me—
Oh! have the traitors harmed them?
Guta. Do not think it.
The dowager has a woman's heart.
Eliz. Ay, ay —
But she's a mother — and mothers will dare all things —
Oh! Love can make us fiends, as well as angels.
My babies! Weeping? Oh, have mercy, Lord!
On me heap all Thy wrath — I understand it:
What can blind senseless terror do for them?
Guta. Plead, plead your penances! Great God, consider
All she has done and suffered, and forbear
To smite her like a worldling!
Eliz. Silence, girl!
I'd plead my deeds, if mine own character,
My strength of will had fathered them: but no —
They are His, who worked them in me, in despite
Of mine own selfish and luxurious will —
Shall I bribe Him with His own? For pain, I tell thee,

I need more pain than mine own will inflicts,
Pain which shall break that will. — Yet spare them, Lord!
Go to — I am a fool to wish them life —
And greater fool to miscall life, this headache —
This nightmare of our gross and crude digestion —
This fog which steams up from our freezing clay —
While waking heaven's beyond. No! slay them, traitors!
Cut through the channels of those innocent breaths
Whose music charmed my lone nights, ere they learn
To love the world, and hate the wretch who bore them! [*Weeps.*

Guta. This storm will blind us both: come here, and shield you
Behind this buttress.

Eliz. What's a wind to me?
I can see up the street here, if they come —
They do not come! — Oh! my poor weanling lambs —
Struck dead by carrion ravens!
What then, I have borne worse. But yesterday
I thought I had a husband — and now — now!
Guta! He called a holy man before he died?

Guta. The Bishop of Jerusalem, 't is said,
With holy oil, and with the blessed body
Of Him for whom he died, did speed him duly
Upon his heavenward flight.

Eliz. Oh happy bishop!
Where are those children? If I had but seen him!
I could have borne all then. One word — one kiss!
Hark! What's that rushing! White doves — one — two — three —
Fleeing before the gale. My children's spirits!

Stay, babies — stay for me! What! Not a moment?
And I so nearly ready to be gone?
Guta. Still on your children?
Eliz. Oh! this grief is light
And floats a-top — well, well; it hides a while
That gulf too black for speech — My husband's dead!
I dare not think on 't.
A small bird dead in the snow! Alas! poor minstrel!
A week ago, before this very window,
He warbled, may be, to the slanting sunlight;
And housewives blest him for a merry singer:
And now he freezes at their doors, like me.
Poor foolish brother! didst thou look for payment?
Guta. But thou hast light in darkness: he has none —
The bird 's the sport of time, while our life's floor
Is laid upon eternity; no crack in it
But shows the underlying heaven.
Eliz. Art sure?
Does this look like it, girl! No — I 'll trust yet —
Some have gone mad for less; but why should I?
Who live in time, and not eternity.
'T will end, girl, end; no cloud across the sun
But passes at the last, and gives us back
The face of God once more.
Guta. See here they come,
Dame Isentrudis and your children, all
Safe down the cliff path, through the whirling snow-drifts.
Eliz. Oh Lord, my Lord! I thank Thee!
Loving, and merciful, and tender-hearted,
And even in fiercest wrath remembering mercy.

Lo! here's my ancient foe. What want you,
Sir? [HUGO *enters.*

Hugo. Want? Faith, 't is you who want, not I,
my Lady —

I hear, you are gone a-begging through the town;
So, for your husband's sake, I 'll take you in;
For though I can't forget your scurvy usage,
He was a very honest sort of fellow,
Though mad as a March hare; so come you in.

Eliz. But know you, sir, that all my husband's
vassals
Are bidden bar their doors to me?

Hugo. I know it:
And therefore come you in: my house is mine:
No upstarts shall lay down the law to me;
Not they, mass: but mind you, no canting here —
No psalm-singing; all candles out at eight:
Beggars must not be choosers. Come along!

Eliz. I thank you, sir; and for my children's
sake
I do accept your bounty. (*aside*) Down, proud
heart —
Bend lower — lower ever: thus God deals with thee.
Go, Guta, send the children after me.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Two Peasants enter.

1st Peas. Here's Father January taken a lease of March month, and put in Jack Frost for bailiff. What be I to do for spring-feed if the weather holds, — and my ryelands as bare as the back of my hand?

2d Peas. That's your luck. Freeze on, say I, and may Mary Mother send us snow a yard deep. I have ten ton of hay yet to sell — ten ton,

man — there 's my luck: every man for himself, and — Why here comes that handsome canting girl, used to be about the Princess.

GUTA *enters.*

Guta. Well met, fair sirs! I know you kind and loyal,
And bound by many a favor to my mistress:
Say, will you bear this letter for her sake
Unto her aunt, the rich and holy lady
Who rules the nuns of Kitzingen?

2d Peas. If I do, pickle me in a barrel among cabbage.
She told me once, God's curse would overtake me,
For grinding of the poor: her turn 's come now.

Guta. Will you, then, help her? She will pay you richly.

1st. Peas. Ay? How, dame? How? Where will the money come from?

Guta. God knows —

1st Peas. And you do not.

Guta. Why, but last winter,
When all your stacks were fired, she lent you gold.

1st Peas. Well — I 'll be generous: as the times are hard,
Say, if I take your letter, will you promise
To marry me yourself?

Guta. Ay, marry you,
Or anything, if you 'll but go to-day:
At once, mind. [*Giving him the letter.*

1st Peas. Ay, I 'll go. Now, you 'll remember?

Guta. Straight to her ladyship at Kitzingen.
God and His saints deal with you, as you deal
With us this day. [*Exit.*

2d Peas. What! art thou fallen in love promiscuously?

1st Peas. Why, see, now, man; she has her mistress' ear;
And if I marry her, no doubt they 'll make me
Bailiff, or land-steward; and there 's noble pickings
In that same line.

2d Peas. Thou hast bought a pig in a poke:
Her priest will shrive her off from such a bargain.

1st Peas. Dost think? Well — I 'll not fret myself about it.
See, now, before I start, I must get home
Those pigs from off the forest; chop some furze;
And then to get my supper, and my horse's:
And then a man will need to sit a while,
And take his snack of brandy for digestion;
And then to fettle up my sword and buckler;
And then, bid 'em all good-bye: and by that time
'T will be 'most nightfall — I 'll just go to-morrow.
Off — here she comes again. [*Exeunt.*

ISENTRUDIS *and* GUTA *enter, with the Children.*

Guta. I warned you of it; I knew she would not stay
An hour, thus treated like a slave — an idiot.

Isen. Well, 't was past bearing: so we are thrust forth
To starve again. Are all your jewels gone?

Guta. All pawned and eaten — and for her, you know,
She never bore the worth of one day's meal
About her dress. We can but die — No foe
Can ban us from that rest.

Isen. Ay, but these children! — Well — if it must be,

Here, Guta, pull off this old withered hand
My wedding-ring; the man who gave it me
Should be in heaven — and there he 'll know my heart.
Take it, girl, take it. Where 's the Princess now?
She stopped before a crucifix to pray;
But why so long?

Guta. Oh! prayer, to her rapt soul,
Is like the drunkenness of the autumn bee,
Who, scent-enchanted, on the latest flower,
Heedless of cold, will linger listless on,
And freeze in odorous dreams.

Isen. Ah! here she comes.

Guta. Dripping from head to foot with wet and mire!
How 's this?

ELIZABETH *entering.*

Eliz. How? Oh, my fortune rises to full flood:
I met a friend just now, who told me truths
Wholesome and stern, of my deceitful heart —
Would God I had known them earlier! — and enforced
Her lesson so, as I shall ne'er forget it
In body or in mind.

Isen. What means all this?

Eliz. You know the stepping-stones across the ford.
There as I passed, a certain aged crone,
Whom I had fed, and nursed, year after year,
Met me mid-stream — thrust past me stoutly on —
And rolled me headlong in the freezing mire.
There as I lay and weltered, — "Take that, Madam,
For all your selfish hypocritic pride
Which thought it such a vast humility

To wash us poor folks' feet, and use our bodies
For staves to build withal your Jacob's-ladder.
What! you would mount to heaven upon our backs?
The ass has thrown his rider." She crept on —
I washed my garments in the brook hard by —
And came here, all the wiser.

Guta. Miscreant hag!

Isen. Alas, you 'll freeze.

Guta. Who could have dreamt the witch
Could harbor such a spite?

Eliz. Nay, who could dream
She would have guessed my heart so well? Dull boors
See deeper than we think, and hide within
Those leathern hulls unfathomable truths,
Which we amid thought's glittering mazes lose.
They grind among the iron facts of life,
And have no time for self-deception.

Isen. Come —
Put on my cloak — stand here, behind the wall.
Oh! is it come to this? She 'll die of cold.

Guta. Ungrateful fiend!

Eliz. Let be — we must not think on 't
The scoff was true — I thank her — I thank God —
This too I needed. I had built myself
A Babel-tower, whose top should reach to heaven,
Of poor men's praise and prayers, and subtle pride
At mine own alms. 'T is crumbled into dust!
Oh! I have leant upon an arm of flesh —
And here 's its strength! I 'll walk by faith — by faith
And rest my weary heart on Christ alone —
On Him, the all-sufficient!
Shame on me! dreaming thus about myself,
While you stand shivering here. [*To her little Son.*

Art cold, young knight?
Knights must not cry — Go slide, and warm thyself.
Where shall we lodge to-night?
Isen. There 's no place open,
But that foul tavern, where we lay last night.
Elizabeth's Son (*clinging to her*). Oh, mother, mother! go not to that house —
Among those fierce lank men, who laughed, and scowled,
And showed their knives, and sang strange ugly songs
Of you and us. Oh mother! let us be!
Eliz. Hark! look! His father's voice! — his very eye —
Opening so slow and sad, then sinking down
In luscious rest again!
Isen. Bethink you, child —
Eliz. Oh yes — I 'll think — we 'll to our tavern friends;
If they be brutes, 't was my sin left them so.
Guta. 'T is but for a night or two: three days will bring
The Abbess hither.
Isen. And then to Bamberg straight
For knights and men-at-arms! Your uncle's wrath —
Guta (*aside*). Hush! hush! you 'll fret her, if you talk of vengeance.
Isen. Come to our shelter.
Children. Oh stay here, stay here!
Behind these walls.
Eliz. Ay — stay a while in peace. The storms are still.
Beneath her eider robe the patient earth
Watches in silence for the sun: we 'll sit

And gaze up with her at the changeless heaven,
Until this tyranny be overpast.
Come. (*aside*) Lost! Lost! Lost!
[*They enter a neighboring Ruin.*

Scene III

A Chamber in the Bishop's Palace at Bamberg.
Elizabeth *and* Guta.

Guta. You have determined?
Eliz. Yes — to go with him.
I have kept my oath too long to break it now.
I will to Marpurg, and there waste away
In meditation and in pious deeds,
Till God shall set me free.
Guta. How if your uncle
Will have you marry? Day and night, they say,
He talks of nothing else.
Eliz. Never, girl, never!
Save me from that at least, oh God!
Guta. He spoke
Of giving us, your maidens, to his knights
In carnal wedlock: but I fear him not:
For God's own word is pledged to keep me pure —
I am a maid.
Eliz. And I, alas! am none!
Oh, Guta! dost thou mock my widowed love?
I was a wife — 't is true: I was not worthy —
But there was meaning in that first wild fancy;
'T was but the innocent springing of the sap —
The witless yearning of an homeless heart —
Do I not know that God has pardoned me?
But now — to rouse and turn of mine own will,

In cool and full foreknowledge, this worn soul
Again to that, which, when God thrust it on me,
Bred but one shame of ever-gnawing doubt,
Were — No, my burning cheeks! We'll say no more.
Ah! loved and lost! Though God's chaste grace should fail me,
My weak idolatry of thee would give
Strength that should keep me true: with mine own hands
I 'd mar this tear-worn face, till petulant man
Should loathe its scarred and shapeless ugliness.

Guta. But your poor children? What becomes of them?

Eliz. Oh! she who was not worthy of a husband
Does not deserve his children. What are they, darlings,
But snares to keep me from my heavenly spouse
By picturing the spouse I must forget?
Well — 't is blank horror. Yet if grief's good for me,
Let me down into grief's blackest pit,
And follow out God's cure by mine own deed.

Guta. What will your kinsfolk think?

Eliz. What will they think!
What pleases them. That argument's a staff
Which breaks whene'er you lean on 't. Trust me, girl,
That fear of man sucks out love's soaring ether,
Baffles faith's heavenward eyes, and drops us down,
To float, like plumeless birds, on any stream.
Have I not proved it?
There was a time with me, when every eye

Did scorch like flame: if one looked cold on me,
I straight accused myself of mortal sins:
Each fopling was my master: I have lied
From very fear of mine own serving-maids.
That 's past, thank God's good grace!

Guta. And now you leap
To the other end of the line.

Eliz. In self-defence.
I am too weak to live by half my conscience;
I have no wit to weigh and choose the mean;
Life is too short for logic; what I do
I must do simply; God alone must judge —
For God alone shall guide, and God's elect —
I shrink from earth's chill frosts too much to crawl —
I have snapped opinion's chains, and now I 'll soar
Up to the blazing sunlight, and be free.

The BISHOP *of* BAMBERG *enters.* CONRAD *following.*

Bishop. The Devil plagued St. Antony in the likeness of a lean friar! Between mad monks and mad women, bedlam's broke loose, I think.

Con. When the spirit first descended on the elect, seculars then, too, said mocking, "These men are full of new wine."

Bishop. Seculars, truly! If I had not in my secularity picked up a spice of chivalry to the ladies, I should long ago have turned out you and your regulars, to cant elsewhere. Plague on this gout — I must sit.

Eliz. Let me settle your cushion, uncle.

Bishop. So! girl! I sent for you from Botenstain. I had a mind, now, to have kept you there until your wits returned, and you would say Yes

to some young noble suitor. As if I had not had trouble enough about your dower! — If I had had to fight for it, I should not have minded: — but these palavers and conferences have fretted me into the gout: and now you would throw all away again, tired with your toy, I suppose. What shall I say to the Counts, Varila, and the Cupbearer, and all the noble knights who will hazard their lands and lives, in trying to right you with that traitor? I am ashamed to look them in the face! To give all up to the villain! — To pay him for his treason!

Eliz. Uncle, I give but what to me is worthless. He loves these baubles — let him keep them, then: I have my dower.

Bishop. To squander on nuns and beggars, at this rogue's bidding? Why not marry some honest man? You may have your choice of kings and princes; and if you have been happy with one gentleman, Mass! say I, why can't you be happy with another? What saith the Scripture? "I will that the younger widows marry, bear children," — not run after monks, and what not — What's good for the filly, is good for the mare, say I.

Eliz. Uncle, I soar now at a higher pitch —
To be henceforth the bride of Christ alone.

Bishop. Ahem! — a pious notion — in moderation. We must be moderate, my child, moderate: I hate overdoing anything — especially religion.

Con. Madam, between your uncle and myself
This question in your absence were best mooted.

[*Exit* ELIZABETH.

Bishop. How, priest? do you order her about like a servant-maid?

Con. The saints forbid! Now — ere I lose a moment — [*Kneeling.*
(*Aside*) All things to all men be — and so save some —
(*Aloud*) Forgive, your grace, forgive me,
If mine unmannered speech in aught have clashed
With your more tempered and melodious judgment:
Your courage will forgive an honest warmth.
God knows, I serve no private interests.
Bishop. Your order 's, hey? to wit?
Con. My Lord, my Lord,
There may be higher aims: but what I said,
I said but for our Church, and our cloth's honor.
Ladies' religion, like their love, we know,
Requires a gloss of verbal exaltation,
Lest the sweet souls should understand themselves;
And clergymen must talk up to the mark.
Bishop. We all know, Gospel preached in the mother-tongue
Sounds too like common sense.
Con. Or too unlike it:
You know the world, your grace; you know the sex —
Bishop. Ahem! As a spectator.
Con. *Philosophicè* —
Just so — You know their rage for shaven crowns —
How they 'll deny their God — but not their priest —
Flirts — scandal-mongers — in default of both come
Platonic love — worship of art and genius —
Idols which make them dream of heaven, as girls
Dream of their sweethearts, when they sleep on bridecake.
It saves from worse — we are not all Abelards.

Bishop (*aside*). Some of us have his tongue, if not his face.

Con. There lies her fancy; do but balk her of it —

She 'll bolt to cloisters, like a rabbit scared.
Head her from that — she 'll wed some pink-faced boy —
The more low-bred and penniless, the likelier.
Send her to Marpurg, and her brain will cool.
Tug at the kite, 't will only soar the higher:
Give it but line, my lord, 't will drop like slate.
Use but that eagle's glance, whose daring foresight
In chapter, camp, and council, wins the wonder
Of timid trucklers — Scan results and outcomes —
The scale is heavy in your grace's favor.

Bishop. Bah! priest! What can this Marpurg-madness do for me?

Con. Leave you the tutelage of all her children.

Bishop. Thank you — to play the dry-nurse to three starving brats.

Con. The minor's guardian guards the minor's lands.

Bishop. Unless they are pitched away in building hospitals.

Con. Instead of fattening in your wisdom's keeping.

Bishop. Well, well, — but what gross scandal to the family!

Con. The family, my lord, would gain a saint.

Bishop. Ah! monk, that canonization costs a frightful sum.

Con. These fees, just now, would gladly be remitted.

Bishop. These are the last days, faith, when Rome's too rich to take!

Con. The Saints forbid, my lord, the fisher's see
Were so o'ercursed by Mammon! But you grieve,
I know, to see foul weeds of heresy
Of late o'errun your diocese.
Bishop. Ay, curse them!
I've hanged some dozens.
Con. Worthy of yourself!
But yet the faith needs here some mighty triumph —
Some bright example, whose resplendent blaze
May tempt that fluttering tribe within the pale
Of Holy Church again —
Bishop. To singe their wings?
Con. They'll not come near enough. Again — there are
Who dare arraign your prowess, and assert
A churchman's energies were better spent
In pulpits than the tented field. Now mark —
Mark, what a door is opened. Give but scope
To this her huge capacity for sainthood —
Set her, a burning and a shining light
To all your people — Such a sacrifice,
Such loan to God of your own flesh and blood,
Will silence envious tongues, and prove you wise
For the next world as for this; will clear your name
From calumnies which argue worldliness;
Buy of itself the joys of paradise;
And clench your Lordship's interest with the pontiff.
Bishop. Well, well, we'll think on't.
Con. Sir, I doubt you not.

Re-enter ELIZABETH.

Eliz. Uncle, I am determined.
Bishop. So am I.
You shall to Marpurg with this holy man.

Eliz. Ah, there you speak again like my own uncle.

I'll go — to rest (*aside*) and die. I only wait
To see the bones of my beloved laid
In some fit resting-place. A messenger
Proclaims them near. Oh, God!

Bishop. We'll go, my child,
And meeting them with all due honor, show
In our own worship, honorable minds.

[*Exit* ELIZABETH.

A messenger! How far off are they, then?

Serv. Some two days' journey, sir.

Bishop. Two days' journey, and nought prepared? Here, chaplain — Brother Hippodamas! Chaplain, I say! (HIPPODAMAS *enters.*) Call the apparitor — ride off with him, right and left — Don't wait even to take your hawk — Tell my knights to be with me, with all their men-at-arms, at noon on the second day. Let all be of the best, say — the brightest of arms and the newest of garments. Mass! we must show our smartest before these crusaders — they'll be full of new fashions, I warrant 'em — the monkeys that have seen the world. And here, boy (*to a Page*), set me a stoup of wine in the oriel-room, and another for this good monk.

Con. Pardon me, blessedness — but holy rule —

Bishop. Oh! I forgot. — A pail of water and a peck of beans for the holy man! — Order up my equerry, and bid my armorer — vestryman, I mean — look out my newest robes. — Plague on this gout.

[*Exeunt, following the Bishop.*

Scene IV

The Nave of Bamberg Cathedral. A procession entering the West Door headed by Elizabeth *and the Bishop, Nobles, etc. Religious bearing the Coffin which encloses* Lewis' *Bones.*

1st Lady. See! the procession comes — the mob streams in
At every door. Hark! how the steeples thunder
Their solemn bass above the wailing choir.

2d Lady. They will stop at the screen.

Knight. And there, as I hear, open the coffin. Push forward, ladies, to that pillar: thence you will see all.

1st Peasant. Oh dear! oh dear! If any man had told me that I should ride forty miles on this errand, to see him that went out flesh come home grass, like the flower of the field!

2d Peas. We have changed him, but not mended him, say I, friend.

1st Peas. Never we. He knew where a yeoman's heart lay! One that would clap a man on the back when his cow died, and behave like a gentleman to him — that never met you after a hailstorm without lightening himself of a few pocket-burners.

2d Peas. Ay, that's your poor-man's plaster: that's your right grease for this world's creaking wheels.

1st Peas. Nay, that's your rich man's plaster too, and covers the multitude of sins. That's your big pike's swimming-bladder, that keeps

him atop and feeding: that's his calling and election, his oil of anointing, his *salvum fac regem*, his yeoman of the wardrobe, who keeps the velvet-piled side of this world uppermost, lest his delicate eyes should see the warp that holds it.

2d Peas. Who's the warp, then?

1st Peas. We, man, the friezes and fustians, that rub on till we get frayed through with overwork, and then all's abroad, and the nakedness of Babylon is discovered, and catch who catch can.

Old Woman. Pity they only brought his bones home! He would have made a lovely corpse, surely. He was a proper man!

1st Lady. Oh, the mincing step he had with him! and the delicate hand on a horse, fingering the reins as St. Cicely does the organ-keys!

2d Lady. And for hunting, another Siegfried.

Knight. If he was Siegfried the gay, she was Chriemhild the grim; and as likely to prove a firebrand as the girl in the ballad.

1st Lady. Gay, indeed! His smiles were like plumcake, the sweeter the deeper iced. I never saw him speak civil word to woman, but to her.

2d Lady. Oh, ye Saints! There was honey spilt on the ground! If I had such a knight, I'd never freeze alone on the chamber-floor, like some that never knew when they were well off. I'd never elbow him off to crusades with my pruderies.

"Pluck your apples while they're ripe,
And pull your flowers in May, O!"

Eh! Mother?

Old Woman. "Till when she grew wizened, and he grew cold,
The balance lay even 'twixt young and old."

Monk. Thus Satan bears witness perforce against the vanities of Venus! But what's this babbling? *Carolationes* in the holy place? *Tace, vetula! taceas, taceto* also, and that forthwith.

Old Woman. Tace in your teeth, and taceas also, begging-box! Who put the halter round his waist to keep it off his neck, — who? Get behind your screen, sirrah! Am I not a burgher's wife? Am I not in the nave? Am I not on my own ground? Have I brought up eleven children, without nurse wet or dry, to be taced nowadays by friars in the nave? Help! good folks! Where be these rooks a-going?

Knight. The monk has vanished.

1st Peas. It's ill letting out waters, he finds. Who is that old gentleman, sir, holds the Princess so tight by the hand?

Knight. Her uncle, knave, the Bishop.

1st Peas. Very right, he: for she's almost a born natural, poor soul. It was a temptation to deal with her.

2d Peas. Thou didst cheat her shockingly, Frank, time o' the famine, on those nine sacks of maslin meal.

Knight. Go tell her of it, rascal, and she'll thank you for it, and give you a shilling for helping her to a "cross."

Old Woman. Taceing free women in the nave! This comes of your princesses, that turn the world upside down, and demean themselves to hob and nob with these black baldicoots!

Eliz. (*in a low voice*). I saw all Israel scattered on the hills
As sheep that have no shepherd! Oh, my people!
Who crowd with greedy eyes round this my jewel,

Poor ivory, token of his outward beauty —
Oh! had ye known his spirit! — Let his wisdom
Inform your light hearts with that Saviour's likeness
For whom he died! So had ye kept him with you;
And from the coming evils gentle Heaven
Had not withdrawn the righteous: 't is too late!

1st Lady. There now, she smiles; do you think she ever loved him?

Knight. Never creature, but mealy-mouthed inquisitors, and shaven singing birds. She looks now as glad to be rid of him as any colt broke loose.

1st Lady. What will she do now, when this farce is over?

2d Lady. Found an abbey, that's the fashion, and elect herself abbess — set up the first week for queen-of-all-souls — tyrannize over hysterical girls, who are forced to thank her for making them miserable, and so die a saint.

Knight. Will you pray to her, my fair queen?

2d Lady. Not I, sir; the old Saints send me lovers enough, and to spare — yourself for one.

1st Lady. There is the giant-killer slain. But see — they have stopped: who is that raising the coffin lid?

2d Lady. Her familiar spirit, Conrad the heretic-catcher.

Knight. I do defy him! Thou art my only goddess;
My saint, my idol, my — ahem!

1st Lady. That well's run dry.
Look, how she trembles — Now she sinks, all shivering,

Upon the pavement — Why, you'll see nought there
Flirting behind the pillar — Now she rises —
And choking down that proud heart, turns to the altar —
Her hand upon the coffin.

Eliz. I thank thee, gracious Lord, who hast fulfilled
Thine handmaid's mighty longings, with the sight
Of my beloved's bones, and dost vouchsafe
This consolation to the desolate.
I grudge not, Lord, the victim which we gave Thee,
Both he and I, of his most precious life,
To aid Thine holy city: though Thou knowest
His sweetest presence was to this world's joy
As sunlight to the taper — Oh! hadst Thou spared —
Had Thy great mercy let us, hand in hand,
Have toiled through houseless shame, on beggar's dole,
I had been blest: Thou hast him, Lord, Thou hast him —
Do with us what Thou wilt! If at the price
Of this one silly hair, in spite of Thee,
I could reclothe these wan bones with his manhood,
And clasp to my shrunk heart my hero's self —
I would not give it!
I will weep no more —
Lead on, most holy; on the sepulchre
Which stands beside the choir, lay down your burden. [*To the people.*
Now, gentle hosts, within the close hard by,
Will we our court, as queen of sorrows, hold —

The green graves underneath us, and above
The all-seeing vault, which is the eye of God,
Judge of the widow and the fatherless.
There will I plead my children's wrongs, and there,
If, as I think, there boil within your veins
The deep sure currents of your race's manhood,
Ye 'll nail the orphans' badge upon your shields,
And own their cause for God's. We name our
champions —
Rudolf, the Cupbearer, Leutolf of Erlstetten,
Hartwig of Erba, and our loved Count Walter,
Our knights and vassals, sojourners among you.
Follow us.

[*Exit* ELIZABETH, *etc.; the crowd following.*

ACT IV

SCENE I

Night. The Church of a Convent. ELIZABETH, CONRAD, GERARD, *Monks, an Abbess, Nuns, etc., in the distance.*

Conrad. What's this new weakness? At your own request
We come to hear your self-imposed vows——
And now you shrink: where are the high-flown fancies
Which but last week, beside your husband's bier,
You vapored forth? Will you become a jest?
You might have counted this tower's cost, before
You blazoned thus your plans abroad.
Eliz. Oh! spare me!
Con. Spare? Spare yourself; and spare big easy words,
Which prove your knowledge greater than your grace.
Eliz. Is there no middle path? No way to keep
My love for them, and God, at once unstained?
Con. If this were God's world, Madam, and not the devil's,
It might be done.
Eliz. God's world, man! Why, God made it—
The faith asserts it God's.
Con. Potentially—
As every christened rogue 's a child of God,

Or those old hags, Christ's brides — Think of your hornbook —
The world, the flesh, and the devil — a goodly leash!
And yet God made all three. I know the fiend;
And you should know the world: be sure, be sure,
The flesh is not a stork among the cranes.
Our nature, even in Eden gross and vile,
And by miraculous grace alone upheld,
Is now itself, and foul, and damned, must die
Ere we can live; let halting worldlings, Madam,
Maunder against earth's ties, yet clutch them still.

Eliz. And yet God gave them to me —

Con. In the world;
Your babes are yours according to the flesh;
How can you hate the flesh, and love its fruit?

Eliz. The Scripture bids me love them.

Con. Truly so,
While you are forced to keep them; when God's mercy
Doth from the flesh and world deliverance offer,
Letting you bestow them elsewhere, then your love
May cease with its own usefulness, and the spirit
Range in free battle lists; I'll not waste reasons —
We'll leave you, Madam, to the Spirit's voice.

[CONRAD *and* GERARD *withdraw.*

Eliz. (*alone.*) Give up his children! Why, I'd not give up
A lock of hair, a glove his hand had hallowed:
And they are his gift; his pledge; his flesh and blood
Tossed off for my ambition! Ah! my husband!
His ghost's sad eyes upbraid me! Spare me, spare me!
I'd love thee still, if I dared; but I fear God.

And shall I never more see loving eyes
Look into mine, until my dying day?
That's this world's bondage: Christ would have me free,
And 't were a pious deed to cut myself
The last, last strand, and fly: but whither? whither?
What if I cast away the bird i' the hand
And found none in the bush? 'T is possible —
What right have I to arrogate Christ's bride-bed?
Crushed, widowed, sold to traitors? I, o'er whom
His billows and His storms are sweeping? God's not angry:
No, not so much as we with buzzing fly;
Or in the moment of His wrath's awakening
We should be — nothing. No — there's worse than that —
What if He but sat still, and let be be?
And these deep sorrows, which my vain conceit
Calls chastenings — meant for me — my ailments' cure —
Were lessons for some angels far away,
And I the corpus vile for the experiment?
The grinding of the sharp and pitiless wheels
Of some high Providence, which had its mainspring
Ages ago, and ages hence its end?
That were too horrible! —
To have torn up all the roses from my garden,
And planted thorns instead; to have forged my griefs,
And hugged the griefs I dared not forge; made earth
A hell, for hope of heaven; and after all,
These homeless moors of life toiled through, to wake,

And find blank nothing! Is that angel-world
A gaudy window, which we paint ourselves
To hide the dead void night beyond? The present?
Why here's the present — like this arched gloom,
It hems our blind souls in, and roofs them over
With adamantine vault, whose only voice
Is our own wild prayers' echo: and our future?
It rambles out in endless aisles of mist,
The farther still the darker — Oh, my Saviour!
My God! where art Thou? That's but a tale about Thee,
That crucifix above — it does but show Thee
As Thou wast once, but not as Thou art now —
Thy grief, but not Thy glory: where's that gone?
I see it not without me, and within me
Hell reigns, not Thou!

[*Dashes herself down on the altar steps.*

. . . . . .

Monks in the distance chanting.

"Kings' daughters were among thine honorable women" —

Eliz. Kings' daughters! I am one!

. . . . . .

Monks. "Hearken, oh, daughter, and consider; incline thine ear:
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house,
So shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty:
For He is thy Lord God, and worship thou Him."

Eliz. (*springing up*). I will forget them!
They stand between my soul and its allegiance.
Thou art my God: what matter if Thou love me?

I am Thy bond-slave, purchased with Thy life-
blood;
I will remember nothing, save that debt.
Do with me what Thou wilt. Alas, my babies!
He loves them — they 'll not need me.

CONRAD *advancing.*

Con. How now, Madam!
Have these your prayers unto a nobler will
Won back that wandering heart?
Eliz. God's will is spoken!
The flesh is weak; the spirit 's fixed, and dares, —
Stay! confess, sir,
Did not yourself set on your brothers here
To sing me to your purpose?
Con. As I live
I meant it not; yet had I bribed them to it,
Those words were no less God's.
Eliz. I know it, I know it;
And I 'll obey them: come, the victim 's ready.

[*Lays her hand on the altar.* GERARD, *Abbess, and Monks descend and advance.*]

All worldly goods and wealth, which once I loved,
I do now count but dross: and my beloved,
The children of my womb, I now regard
As if they were another's. God is witness.
My pride is to despise myself; my joy
All insults, sneers, and slanders of mankind;
No creature now I love, but God alone.
Oh, to be clear, clear, clear, of all but Him!
Lo, here I strip me of all earthly helps —
[*Tearing off her clothes.*
Naked and barefoot through the world to follow
My naked Lord — And for my filthy pelf —
Con. Stop, Madam —

Eliz. Why so, sir?
Con. Upon thine oath!
Thy wealth is God's, not thine—How darest renounce
The trust He lays on thee? I do command thee,
Being, as Aaron, in God's stead, to keep it
Inviolate, for the Church and thine own needs.
Eliz. Be it so—I have no part nor lot in 't—
There—I have spoken.
Abbess. Oh, noble soul! which neither gold, nor love,
Nor scorn can bend!
Gerard. And think what pure devotions,
What holy prayers must they have been, whose guerdon
Is such a flood of grace!
Nuns. What love again!
What flame of charity, which thus prevails
In virtue's guest!
Eliz. Is self-contempt learnt thus?
I 'll home.
Abbess. And yet how blest, in these cool shades
To rest with us, as in a land-locked pool,
Touched last and lightest by the ruffling breeze.
Eliz. No! no! no! no! I will not die in the dark:
I 'll breathe free the fresh air until the last,
Were it but a month—I have such things to do—
Great schemes—brave schemes—and such a little time!
Though now I am harnessed light as any foot-page.
Come, come, my ladies. [*Exeunt* ELIZABETH, *etc.*
Ger. Alas, poor lady!
Con. Why alas, my son?
She longs to die a saint, and here 's the way to it.

Ger. Yet why so harsh? why with remorseless knife
Home to the stem prune back each bough and bud?
I thought the task of education was
To strengthen, not to crush; to train and feed
Each subject toward fulfilment of its nature,
According to the mind of God, revealed
In laws, congenital with every kind
And character of man.
Con. A heathen dream!
Young souls but see the gay and warm outside,
And work but in the shallow upper soil.
Mine deeper, and the sour and barren rock
Will stop you soon enough. Who trains God's Saints,
He must transform, not pet — Nature's corrupt throughout —
A gaudy snake, which must be crushed, not tamed,
A cage of unclean birds, deceitful ever;
Born in the likeness of the fiend, which Adam
Did at the Fall, the Scripture saith, put on.
Canst thou draw out Leviathan with a hook,
To make him sport for thy maidens? Scripture saith
Who is the prince of this world — so forget not.
Ger. Forgive, if my more weak and carnal judgment
Be startled by your doctrines, and doubt trembling
The path whereon you force yourself and her.
Con. Startled? Belike — belike — let doctrines be;
Thou shalt be judged by thy works; so see to them,
And let divines split hairs: dare all thou canst;

Be all thou darest; — that will keep the brains full.
Have thy tools ready, God will find thee work —
Then up, and play the man. Fix well thy purpose —
Let one idea, like an orbed sun,
Rise radiant in thine heaven; and then round it
All doctrines, forms, and disciplines will range
As dim parhelia, or as needful clouds,
Needful, but mist-begotten, to be dashed
Aside, when fresh shall serve thy purpose better.

Ger. How? dashed aside?

Con. Yea, dashed aside — why not?
The truths, my son, are safe in God's abysses —
While we patch up the doctrines to look like them.
The best are tarnished mirrors — clumsy bridges,
Whereon, as on firm soil, the mob may walk
Across the gulf of doubt, and know no danger.
We, who see heaven, may see the hell which girds it.
Blind trust for them. When I came here from Rome,
Among the Alps, all through one frost-bound dawn,
Waiting with sealed lips the noisy day,
I walked upon a marble mead of snow —
An angel's spotless plume, laid there for me:
Then from the hillside, in the melting noon,
Looked down the gorge, and lo! no bridge, no snow —
But seas of writhing glacier, gashed and scored
With splintered gulfs, and fathomless crevasses,
Blue lips of hell, which sucked down roaring rivers
The fiends who fled the sun. The path of Saints
Is such; so shall she look from heaven, and see
The road which led her thither. Now we 'll go,
And find some lonely cottage for her lodging;
Her shelter now is but a crumbling ruin

Roofed in with pine boughs — discipline more healthy
For soul, than body: She 's not ripe for death.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Open space in a Suburb of Marpurg, near Elizabeth's *Hut.* Count Walter *and* Count Pama *of Hungary entering.*

C. Pama. I have prepared my nerves for a shock.

C. Wal. You are wise, for the world 's upside down here. The last gateway brought us out of Christendom into the New Jerusalem, the fifth Monarchy, where the Saints possess the earth. Not a beggar here but has his pockets full of fair ladies' tokens: not a barefooted friar but rules a princess.

C. Pama. Creeping, I opine, into widows' houses, and for a pretence making long prayers.

C. Wal. Don't quote Scripture here, sir, especially in that gross, literal way! The new lights here have taught us that Scripture 's saying one thing, is a certain proof that it means another. Except, by the by, in one text.

C. Pama. What 's that?

C. Wal. "Ask, and it shall be given you."

C. Pama. Ah! So we are to take nothing literally, that they may take literally everything themselves?

C. Wal. Humph! As for your text, see if they do not saddle it on us before the day is out, as

glibly as ever you laid it on them. Here comes the lady's tyrant, of whom I told you.

CONRAD *advances from the Hut.*

Con. And what may Count Walter's valor want here? [COUNT WALTER *turns his back.*

C. Pama. I come, Sir Priest, from Andreas, king renowned
Of Hungary, ambassador unworthy
Unto the Landgravine, his saintly daughter;
And fain would be directed to her presence.

Con. That is as I shall choose. But I'll not stop you.
I do not build with straw. I'll trust my pupils
To worldlings' honeyed tongues, who make long prayers,
And enter widows' houses for pretence.
There dwells the lady, who has chosen too long
The better part, to have it taken from her.
Besides that with strange dreams and revelations
She has of late been edified.

C. Wal. Bah! but they will serve your turn — and hers.

Con. What do you mean?

C. Wal. When you have her cut off from child and friend, and even Isentrudis and Guta, as I hear, are thrust out by you to starve, and she sits there, shut up like a bear in a hole, to feed on her own substance; if she has not some of these visions to look at, how is she, or any other of your poor self-gorged prisoners, to help fancying herself the only creature on earth?

Con. How now? Who more than she, in faith and practice, a living member of the Communion of Saints? Did she not lately publicly dispense

in charity in a single day five hundred marks and more? Is it not my continual labor to keep her from utter penury through her extravagance in almsgiving? For whom does she take thought but for the poor, on whom, day and night, she spends her strength? Does she not tend them from the cradle, nurse them, kiss their sores, feed them, bathe them, with her own hands, clothe them, living and dead, with garments, the produce of her own labor? Did she not of late take into her own house a paralytic boy, whose loathsomeness had driven away every one else? And now that we have removed that charge, has she not with her a leprous boy, to whose necessities she ministers hourly, by day and night? What valley but blesses her for some school, some chapel, some convent, built by her munificence? Are not the hospices, which she has founded in divers towns, the wonder of Germany? — wherein she daily feeds and houses a multitude of the infirm poor of Christ? Is she not followed at every step by the blessings of the poor? Are not her hourly intercessions for the souls and bodies of all around incessant, world-famous, mighty to save? While she lives only for the Church of Christ, will you accuse her of selfish isolation?

C. Wal. I tell you, monk, if she were not healthier by God's making than ever she will be by yours, her charity would be by this time double-distilled selfishness; the mouths she fed, cupboards to store good works in; the backs she warmed, clothes'-horses to hang out her wares before God; her alms not given, but fairly paid, a halfpenny for every halfpenny-worth of eternal life; earth her chess-board, and the men and

women on it merely pawns for her to play a winning game — puppets and horn-books to teach her unit holiness — a private workshop in which to work out her own salvation. Out upon such charity!

Con. God hath appointed that our virtuous deeds
Each merit their rewards.

C. Wal. Go to — go to. I have watched you and your crew, how you preach up selfish ambition for divine charity and call prurient longings celestial love, while you blaspheme that very marriage from whose mysteries you borrow all your cant. The day will come when every husband and father will hunt you down like vermin; and may I live to see it.

Con. Out on thee, heretic!

C. Wal. (*drawing*). Liar! At last?

C. Pama. In God's name, sir, what if the Princess find us?

C. Wal. Ay — for her sake. But put that name on me again, as you do on every good Catholic who will not be your slave and puppet, and if thou goest home with ears and nose, there is no hot blood in Germany.

[*They move towards the Cottage.*

Con. (*alone*). Were I as once I was, I could revenge:
But now all private grudges wane like mist
In the keen sunlight of my full intent;
And this man counts but for some sullen bull
Who paws and mutters at unheeding pilgrims
His empty wrath: yet let him bar my path,
Or stay me but one hour in my life-purpose,
And I will fell him as a savage beast,
God's foe, not mine. Beware thyself, Sir Count!

[*Exit. The Counts return from the Cottage.*

C. Pama. Shortly she will return; here to expect her
Is duty both, and honor. Pardon me —
Her humors are well known here? Passers by
Will guess who 't is we visit?
C. Wal. Very likely.
C. Pama. Well, travellers see strange things — and do them too.
Hem! this turf-smoke affects my breath: we might
Draw back a space.
C. Wal. Certie, we were in luck,
Or both our noses would have been snapped off
By those two she-dragons; how their sainthoods squealed
To see a brace of beards peep in! Poor child!
Two sweet companions for her loneliness!
C. Pama. But ah! what lodging! 'T is at that my heart bleeds!
That hut, whose rough and smoke-embrowned spars
Dip to the cold clay floor on either side!
Her seats bare deal! — her only furniture
Some earthen crock or two! Why, sir, a dungeon
Were scarce more frightful: such a choice must argue
Aberrant senses, or degenerate blood!
C. Wal. What? Were things foul?
C. Pama. I marked not, sir.
C. Wal. I did.
You might have eat your dinner off the floor.
C. Pama. Off any spot, sir, which a princess' foot
Had hallowed by its touch.
C. Wal. Most courtierly.
Keep, keep those sweet saws for the lady's self.

(*Aside*) Unless that shock of the nerves shall send them flying.

C. Pama. Yet whence this depth of poverty? I thought
You and her champions had recovered for her
Her lands and titles.

C. Wal. Ay; that coward Henry
Gave them all back as lightly as he took them:
Certie, we were four gentle applicants —
And Rudolph told him some unwelcome truths —
Would God that all of us might hear our sins,
As Henry heard that day!

C. Pama. Then she refused them?

C. Wal. "It ill befits," quoth she, "my royal blood,
To take extorted gifts; I tender back
By you to him, for this his mortal life,
That which he thinks by treason cheaply bought;
To which my son shall, in his father's right,
By God's good will, succeed. For that dread height
May Christ by many woes prepare his youth!"

C. Pama. Humph!

C. Wal. Why here — no, 't cannot be —

C. Pama. What hither comes
Forth from the hospital, where, as they told us,
The Princess labors in her holy duties?
A parti-colored ghost that stalks for penance?
Ah! a good head of hair, if she had kept it
A thought less lank; a handsome face too, trust me,
But worn to fiddle-strings; well, we 'll be knightly —

[*As* ELIZABETH *meets him.*]

Stop, my fair queen of rags and patches, turn
Those solemn eyes a moment from your distaff,

And say, what tidings your magnificence
Can bring us of the Princess?
Eliz. I am she.

[COUNT PAMA *crosses himself and falls on his knees.*]

C. Pama. Oh, blessed saints and martyrs! Open, earth!
And hide my recreant knighthood in thy gulf!
Yet, mercy, Madam! for till this strange day
Who e'er saw spinning wool, like village-maid,
A royal scion?
C. Wal. (*kneeling*). My beloved mistress!
Eliz. Ah! faithful friend! Rise, gentles, rise, for shame;
Nay, blush not, gallant sir. You have seen, ere now,
Kings' daughters do worse things than spinning wool,
Yet never reddened. Speak your errand out.
C. Pama. I from your father, Madam —
Eliz. Oh! I divine;
And grieve that you so far have journeyed, sir,
Upon a bootless quest.
C. Pama. But hear me, Madam —
If you return with me (o'erwhelming honor!
For such mean bodyguard too precious treasure)
Your father offers to you half his wealth;
And countless hosts, whose swift and loyal blades
From traitorous grasp shall vindicate your crown.
Eliz. Wealth? I have proved it, and have tossed it from me:
I will not stoop again to load with clay.
War? I have proved that too: should I turn loose

On these poor sheep the wolf whose fangs have gored me,
God's bolt would smite me dead.

C. Pama. Madam, by his gray hairs he doth entreat you.

Eliz. Alas! small comfort would they find in me!
I am a stricken and most luckless deer,
Whose bleeding track but draws the hounds of wrath
Where'er I pause a moment. He has children
Bred at his side, to nurse him in his age —
While I am but an alien and a changeling,
Whom, ere my plastic sense could impress take
Either of his feature or his voice, he lost.

C. Pama. Is it so? Then pardon, Madam, but your father
Must by a father's right command —

Eliz. Command! Ay, that's the phrase of the world: well — tell him,
But tell him gently too — that child and father
Are names, whose earthly sense I have forsworn,
And know no more: I have a heavenly spouse,
Whose service doth all other claims annul.

C. Wal. Ah, lady, dearest lady, be but ruled!
Your Saviour will be there as near as here.

Eliz. What? Thou too, friend? Dost thou not know me better?
Wouldst have me leave undone what I begin?
(*To* COUNT PAMA) My father took the cross, sir: so did I:
As he would die at his post, so will I die:
He is a warrior: ask him, should I leave
This my safe fort, and well-proved vantage-ground,
To roam on this world's flat and fenceless steppes?

C. Pama. Pardon me, Madam, if my grosser wit
Fail to conceive your sense.

Eliz. It is not needed.
Be but the mouthpiece to my father, sir;
And tell him — for I would not anger him —
Tell him, I am content — say, happy — tell him
I prove my kin by prayers for him, and masses
For her who bore me. We shall meet on high.
And say, his daughter is a mighty tree,
From whose wide roots a thousand sapling suckers,
Drink half their life; she dare not snap the threads,
And let her offshoots wither. So farewell.
Within the convent there, as mine own guests,
You shall be fitly lodged. Come here no more.

C. Wal. C. Pama, Farewell, sweet Saint! [*Exeunt.*

Eliz. May God go with you both.
No! I will win for him a nobler name,
Than captive crescents, piles of turbaned heads,
Or towns retaken from the Tartar, give.
In me he shall be greatest; my report
Shall through the ages win the quires of heaven
To love and honor him; and hinds, who bless
The poor man's patron saint, shall not forget
How she was fathered with a worthy sire. [*Exit.*

Scene III

Night. Interior of Elizabeth's *Hut. A leprous Boy sleeping on a Mattress.* Elizabeth *watching by him.*

Eliz. My shrunk limbs, stiff from many a blow,
Are crazed with pain.
A long dim formless fog-bank, creeping low,
Dulls all my brain.

I remember two young lovers,
In a golden gleam.
Across the brooding darkness shrieking hovers
That fair, foul dream.

My little children call to me,
"Mother! so soon forgot?"
From out dark nooks their yearning faces startle me,
Go, babes! I know you not!

Pray! pray! or thou 'lt go mad.

. . . . . .

The past 's our own:
No fiend can take that from us! Ah, poor boy!
Had I, like thee, been bred from my black birth-hour
In filth and shame, counting the soulless months
Only by some fresh ulcer! I 'll be patient —
Here 's something yet more wretched than myself.
Sleep thou on still, poor charge — though I 'll not grudge
One moment of my sickening toil about thee,
Best counsellor — dumb preacher, who dost warn me
How much I have enjoyed, how much have left,
Which thou hast never known. How am I wretched?
The happiness thou hast from me, is mine,
And makes me happy. Ay, there lies the secret —
Could we but crush that ever-craving lust
For bliss, which kills all bliss, and lose our life,
Our barren unit life, to find again
A thousand lives in those for whom we die.
So were we men and women, and should hold
Our rightful rank in God's great universe,

Wherein, in heaven and earth, by will or nature,
Nought lives for self — All, all — from crown to
footstool —
The Lamb, before the world's foundations slain —
The angels, ministers to God's elect —
The sun, who only shines to light a world —
The clouds, whose glory is to die in showers —
The fleeting streams, who in their ocean-graves
Flee the decay of stagnant self-content —
The oak, ennobled by the shipwright's axe —
The soil, which yields its marrow to the flower —
The flower, which feeds a thousand velvet worms,
Born only to be prey for every bird —
All spend themselves for others: and shall man,
Earth's rosy blossom — image of his God —
Whose twofold being is the mystic knot
Which couples earth and heaven — doubly bound
As being both worm and angel, to that service
By which both worms and angels hold their life —
Shall he, whose every breath is debt on debt,
Refuse, without some hope of further wage
Which he calls Heaven, to be what God has made
him?
No! let him show himself the creature's lord
By freewill gift of that self-sacrifice
Which they perforce by nature's law must suffer.
This too I had to learn (I thank thee, Lord!),
To lie crushed down in darkness and the pit —
To lose all heart and hope — and yet to work.
What lesson could I draw from all my own woes —
Ingratitude, oppression, widowhood —
While I could hug myself in vain conceits
Of self-contented sainthood — inward raptures —
Celestial palms — and let ambition's gorge
Taint heaven, as well as earth? Is selfishness

For time, a sin — spun out to eternity
Celestial prudence? Shame! Oh, thrust me forth,
Forth, Lord, from self, until I toil and die
No more for Heaven and bliss, but duty, Lord,
Duty to Thee, although my meed should be
The hell which I deserve! [*Sleeps.*

. . . . . .

Two Women enter.

1st Woman. What! snoring still? 'T is nearly time to wake her
To do her penance.

2d Woman. Wait a while, for love:
Indeed, I am almost ashamed to punish
A bag of skin and bones.

1st Woman. 'T is for her good:
She has had her share of pleasure in this life
With her gay husband; she must have her pain.
We bear it as a thing of course; we know
What mortifications are, although I say it
That should not.

2d Woman. Why, since my old tyrant died,
Fasting I 've sought the Lord, like any Anna,
And never tasted fish, nor flesh, nor fowl,
And little stronger than water.

1st Woman. Plague on this watching!
What work, to make a saint of a fine lady!
See now, if she had been some laborer's daughter,
She might have saved herself, for aught he cared;
But now —

2d Woman. Hush! here the master comes:
I hear him. —

CONRAD *enters.*

Con. My peace, most holy, wise, and watchful wardens!

She sleeps? Well, what complaints have you to bring
Since last we met? How? blowing up the fire?
Cold is the true saint's element — he thrives
Like Alpine gentians, where the frost is keenest—
For there Heaven's nearest—and the ether purest—
(*Aside*) And he most bitter.

2d Woman. Ah! sweet master,
We are not yet as perfect as yourself.

Con. But how has she behaved?

1st Woman. Just like herself—
Now ruffling up like any tourney queen;
Now weeping in dark corners; then next minute
Begging for penance on her knees.

2d Woman. One trick's cured;
That lust of giving; Isentrude and Guta,
The hussies, came here begging but yestreen,
Vowed they were starving.

Con. Did she give to them?

2d Woman. She told them that she dared not.

Con. Good. For them,
I will take measures that they shall not want:
But see you tell her not: she must be perfect.

1st Woman. Indeed, there's not much chance of that a while.
There's others, might be saints, if they were young,
And handsome, and had titles to their names,
If they were helped toward heaven, now—

Con. Silence, horse-skull!
Thank God, that you are allowed to use a finger
Towards building up His chosen tabernacle.

2d Woman. I consider that she blasphemes the means of grace.

Con. Eh? that's a point, indeed.

2d Woman. Why yesterday,

Within the church, before a mighty crowd,
She mocked at all the lovely images,
And said "the money had been better spent
On food and clothes, instead of paint and gilding:
They were but pictures, whose reality
We ought to bear within us."

Con. Awful doctrine!

1st Woman. Look at her carelessness, again — the distaff
Or woolcomb in her hands, even on her bed.
Then, when the work is done, she lets those nuns
Cheat her of half the price.

2d Woman. The Aldenburgers.

Con. Well, well, what more misdoings?
(*aside*) Pah! I am sick on 't.
(*Aloud*) Go sit, and pray by her until she wakes.

The Women retire. CONRAD *sits down by the fire.*

I am dwindling to a peddling chamber-chaplain,
Who hunts for crabs and ballads in maids' sleeves,
I, who have shuffled kingdoms. Oh! 't is easy
To beget great deeds; but in the rearing of them —
The threading in cold blood each mean detail,
And furzebrake of half-pertinent circumstance —
There lies the self-denial.

Women (*in a low voice*). Master! sir, look here!

Eliz. (*rising*). Have mercy, mercy, Lord!

Con. What is it, my daughter? No — she answers not —
Her eyeballs through their sealed lids are bursting,
And yet she sleeps: her body does but mimic
The absent soul's enfranchised wanderings
In the spirit-world.

Eliz. Oh! she was but a worldling!

And think, good Lord, if that this world is hell,
What wonder if poor souls whose lot is fixed here,
Meshed down by custom, wealth, rank, pleasure, ignorance,
Do hellish things in it? Have mercy, Lord;
Even for my sake, and all my woes, have mercy!

Con. There! she is laid again — Some bedlam dream.
So — here I sit; am I a guardian angel
Watching by God's elect? or nightly tiger,
Who waits upon a dainty point of honor
To clutch his prey, till it shall wake and move?
We 'll waive that question: there 's eternity
To answer that in.
How like a marble-carven nun she lies
Who prays with folded palms upon her tomb,
Until the resurrection! Fair and holy!
Oh, happy Lewis! Had I been a knight —
A man at all — What 's this? I must be brutal,
Or I shall love her: and yet that 's no safeguard;
I have marked it oft: ay — with that devilish triumph
Which eyes its victim's writhings, still will mingle
A sympathetic thrill of lust — say, pity.

Eliz. (*awaking*). I am heard! She is saved!
Where am I? What! have I overslept myself?
Oh, do not beat me! I will tell you all —
I have had awful dreams of the other world.

1*st Woman.* Ay! ay! a fine excuse for lazy women,
Who cry nightmare with lying on their backs.

Eliz. I will be heard! I am a prophetess!
God hears me, why not ye?

Con. Quench not the spirit:
If He have spoken, daughter, we must listen.

Eliz. Methought from out the red and heaving earth
My mother rose, whose broad and queenly limbs
A fiery arrow did impale, and round
Pursuing tongues oozed up of nether fire,
And fastened on her: like a winter-blast
Among the steeples, then she shrieked aloud,
"Pray for me, daughter; save me from this torment,
For thou canst save!" And then she told a tale;
It was not true — my mother was not such —
Oh, God! The pander to a brother's sin!
1st Woman. There now? The truth is out! I told you, sister,
About that mother —
Con. Silence, hags! what then?
Eliz. She stretched her arms, and sank. Was it a sin
To love that sinful mother? There I lay —
And in the spirit far away I prayed;
What words I spoke, I know not, nor how long;
Until a small still voice sighed, "Child, thou art heard:"
Then on the pitchy dark a small bright cloud
Shone out, and swelled, and neared, and grew to form,
Till from it blazed my pardoned mother's face
With nameless glory! Nearer still she pressed,
And bent her lips to mine — a mighty spasm
Ran crackling through my limbs, and thousand bells
Rang in my dizzy ears — And so I woke.
Con. 'T was but a dream.
Eliz. 'T was more! 'T was more!
I've tests:

From youth I have lived in two alternate worlds,
And night is live like day. This was no goblin!
'T was a true vision, and my mother's soul
Is freed by my poor prayers from penal fires,
And waits for me in bliss.

Con. Well — be it so then.
Thou seest herein what prize obedience merits.
Now to press forwards: I require your presence
Within the square, at noon, to witness there
The fiery doom — most just and righteous doom —
Of two convicted and malignant heretics,
Who at the stake shall expiate their crime,
And pacify God's wrath against this land.

Eliz. No! no! I will not go!

Con. What's here?
Thou wilt not?
I'll drive thee there with blows.

Eliz. Then I will bear them,
Even as I bore the last, with thankful thoughts
Upon those stripes my Lord endured for me.
Oh, spare them, sir! poor blindfold sons of men!
No saint but daily errs, — and must they burn,
Ah, God! for an opinion?

Con. Fool! opinions?
Who cares for their opinions? 'T is rebellion
Against the system which upholds the world
For which they die: so, lest the infection spread,
We must cut off the members, whose disease
We'd pardon, could they keep it to themselves.

[ELIZABETH *weeps.*

Well, I'll not urge it, — Thou hast other work —
But for thy petulant words do thou this penance:
I do forbid thee here, to give henceforth
Food, coin, or clothes, to any living soul.
Thy thriftless waste doth scandalize the elect,

And maim thine usefulness: thou dost elude
My wise restrictions still: 'T is great, to live
Poor, among riches; when thy wealth is spent,
Want is not merit, but necessity.

Eliz. Oh, let me give!
That only pleasure have I left on earth!

Con. And for that very cause thou must forego it,
And so be perfect. She who lives in pleasure
Is dead, while yet she lives; grace brings no merit
When 't is the express of our own self-will.
To shrink from what we practise; do God's work
In spite of loathings; that 's the path of saints.
I have said. [*Exit with the Women.*

Eliz. Well! I am freezing fast — I have grown of late
Too weak to nurse my sick; and now this outlet,
This one last thawing spring of fellow-feeling,
Is choked with ice — Come, Lord, and set me free.
Think me not hasty! measure not mine age,
Oh, Lord, by these my four-and-twenty winters.
I have lived three lives — three lives.
For fourteen years I was an idiot girl:
Then I was born again; and for five years,
I lived! I lived! and then I died once more;—
One day when many knights came marching by,
And stole away — we'll talk no more of that.
And so these four years since, I have been dead
And all my life is hid with Christ in God.
Nunc igitur dimittas, Domine, servam tuam.

Scene IV

The same. Elizabeth *lying on Straw in a corner. A crowd of Women round her.* Conrad *entering.*

Con. As I expected —
A sermon-mongering herd about her death-bed,
Stifling her with fusty sighs, as flocks of rooks
Despatch, with pious pecks, a wounded brother.
Cant, howl, and whimper! Not an old fool in the town
Who thinks herself religious, but must see
The last of the show and mob the deer to death.
(*Advancing*) Hail! holy ones! How fares your charge to-day?
Abbess. After the blessed sacrament received,
As surfeited with those celestial viands,
And with the blood of life intoxicate,
She lay entranced: and only stirred at times
To eructate sweet edifying doctrine
Culled from your darling sermons.
Woman. Heavenly grace
Imbues her so throughout, that even when pricked
She feels no pain.
Con. A miracle, no doubt.
Heaven's work is ripe, and like some more I know,
Having begun in the spirit, in the flesh
She 's now made perfect: she hath had warnings, too,
Of her decease; and prophesied to me,
Three weeks ago, when I lay like to die,
That I should see her in her coffin yet.

Abbess. 'Tis said, she heard in dreams her Saviour call her
To mansions built for her from everlasting.
Con. Ay, so she said.
Abbess. But tell me, in her confession
Was there no holy shame — no self-abhorrence
For the vile pleasures of her carnal wedlock?
Con. She said no word thereon: as for her shrift,
No Chrisom child could show a chart of thoughts
More spotless than were hers.
Nun. Strange, she said nought;
I had hoped she had grown more pure.
Con. When, next, I asked her,
How she would be interred; "In the vilest weeds,"
Quoth she, "my poor hut holds; I will not pamper
When dead, that flesh, which living I despised.
And for my wealth, see it to the last doit
Bestowed upon the poor of Christ."
2d Woman. Oh grace!
3d Woman. Oh soul to this world poor, but rich toward God!
Eliz. (*awaking*). Hark! how they cry for bread!
Poor souls! be patient!
I have spent all —
I'll sell myself for a slave — feed them with the price.
Come, Guta! Nurse! We must be up and doing!
Alas! they are gone, and begging!
Go! go! They 'll beat me, if I give you aught:
I 'll pray for you, and so you 'll go to Heaven.
I am a saint — God grants me all I ask.
But I must love no creature. Why, Christ loved —
Mary He loved, and Martha, and their brother —

Three friends! and I have none!
When Lazarus lay dead, He groaned in spirit,
And wept — like any widow — Jesus wept!
I 'll weep, weep, weep! pray for that "gift of tears."
They took my friends away, but not my eyes,
Oh, husband, babes, friends, nurse! To die alone!
Crack, frozen brain! Melt, icicle within!

Women. Alas! sweet saint! By bitter pangs she wins
Her crown of endless glory!

Con. But she wins it!
Stop that vile sobbing; she 's unmanned enough
Without your maudlin sympathy.

Eliz. What? weeping?
Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me —
Weep for yourselves.

Women. We do, alas! we do!
What are we without you? [*A pause.*

Woman. Oh, listen, listen!
What sweet sounds from her fast-closed lips are welling,
As from the caverned shaft, deep miners' songs?

Eliz. (*in a low voice*). Through the stifling room
Floats strange perfume;
Through the crumbling thatch
The angels watch,
Over the rotting roof-tree.
They warble, and flutter, and hover and glide,
Wafting old sounds to my dreary bedside,
Snatches of songs which I used to know
When I slept by my nurse, and the swallows
Called me at day-dawn from under the eaves.
Hark to them! Hark to them now —
Fluting like woodlarks, tender and low —
Cool rustling leaves — tinkling waters —

Sheepbells over the lea —
In their silver plumes Eden-gales whisper —
In their hands Eden-lilies — not for me — not for me —

No crown for the poor fond bride!
The song told me so,
Long, long ago,
How the maid chose the white lily;
But the bride she chose
The red red rose,
And by its thorn died she.

Well — in my Father's house are many mansions —

I have trodden the waste howling ocean-foam,
Till I stand upon Canaan's shore,
Where Crusaders from Zion's towers call me home,
To the saints who are gone before.

Con. Still on Crusaders? [*Aside.*
Abbess. What was that sweet song, which just now, my Princess,
You murmured to yourself?
Eliz. Did you not hear
A little bird between me and the wall,
That sang and sang?
Abbess. We heard him not, fair Saint.
Eliz. I heard him, and his merry carol revelled
Through all my brain, and woke my parched throat
To join his song: then angel melodies
Burst through the dull dark, and the mad air quivered
Unutterable music. Nay, you heard him.
Abbess. Nought save yourself.
Eliz. Slow hours! Was that the cock-crow?

Woman. St. Peter's bird did call.
Eliz. Then I must
up —
To matins, and to work — No, my work 's over.
And what is it, what?
One drop of oil on the salt seething ocean!
Thank God, that One was born at this same hour,
Who did our work for us: we 'll talk of Him:
We shall go mad with thinking of ourselves —
We 'll talk of Him, and of that new-made star,
Which, as He stooped into the Virgin's side,
From off His finger, like a signet-gem,
He dropped in the empyrean for a sign.
But the first tear He shed at this His birth-hour,
When He crept weeping forth to see our woe,
Fled up to Heaven in mist, and hid for ever
Our sins, our works, and that same new-made star.
Woman. Poor soul! she wanders!
Con. Wanders, fool? her madness
Is worth a million of your paters, mumbled
At every station between —
Eliz. Oh! thank God
Our eyes are dim! What should we do, if he,
The sneering fiend, who laughs at all our toil,
Should meet us face to face?
Con. We 'd call him fool.
Eliz. There! There! Fly, Satan, fly! 'T is
gone!
Con. The victory 's gained at last!
The fiend is baffled, and her saintship sure!
Oh, people blest of Heaven!
Eliz. Oh, master, master,
You will not let the mob, when I lie dead,
Make me a show — paw over all my limbs —
Pull out my hair — pluck off my finger-nails —

Wear scraps of me for charms and amulets,
As if I were a mummy, or a drug?
As they have done to others — I have seen it —
Nor set me up in ugly naked pictures
In every church, that cold world-hardened wits
May gossip o'er my secret tortures? Promise —
Swear to me! I demand it!

Con. No man lights
A candle, to be hid beneath a bushel:
Thy virtues are the Church's dower: endure
All which the edification of the faithful
Makes needful to be published.

Eliz. Oh, my God!
I had stripped myself of all, but modesty!
Dost Thou claim yet that victim? Be it so.
Now take me home! I have no more to give Thee!
So weak — and yet no pain — why, now nought ails me!
How dim the lights burn! Here —
Where are you, children?
Alas! I had forgotten.
Now I must sleep — for ere the sun shall rise,
I must begone upon a long, long journey
To him I love.

Con. She means her heavenly Bridegroom —
The Spouse of souls.

Eliz. I said, to him I love.
Let me sleep, sleep.
You will not need to wake me — so — good-night.

[*Folds herself into an attitude of repose. The scene closes.*

ACT V

SCENE I. A. D. 1235.

A Convent at Marpurg. Cloisters of the Infirmary. Two aged Monks sitting.

1st Monk. So they will publish to-day the Landgravine's canonization, and translate her to the new church prepared for her. Alack, now, that all the world should be out sight-seeing and saint-making, and we laid up here, like two lame jackdaws in a belfry!

2d Monk. Let be, man — let be. We have seen sights and saints in our time. And, truly, this insolatio suits my old bones better than processioning.

1st Monk. 'T is pleasant enough in the sun, were it not for the flies. Look — there's a lizard. Come you here, little run-about; here's game for you.

2d Monk. A tame fool, and a gay one — *Munditiæ mundanis.*

1st Monk. Catch him a fat fly — my hand shaketh.

2d Monk. If one of your new-lights were here, now, he'd pluck him for a fiend, as Dominic did the live sparrow in chapel.

1st Monk. There will be precious offerings made to-day, of which our house will get its share.

2d Monk. Not we; she always favored the Franciscans most.

1st Monk. 'T was but fair — they were her kith and kin. She lately put on the habit of their third minors.

2d Monk. So have half the fine gentlemen and ladies in Europe. There 's one of your new inventions, now, for letting grand folks serve God and mammon at once, and emptying honest monasteries, where men give up all for the Gospel's sake. And now these Pharisees of Franciscans will go off with full pockets —

1st Monk. While we poor publicans —

2d Monk. Shall not come home all of us justified, I think.

1st Monk. How? Is there scandal among us?

2d Monk. Ask not — ask not. Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise. Of all sins, avoid that same gossiping.

1st Monk. Nay, tell me now. Are we not like David and Jonathan? Have we not worked together, prayed together, journeyed together, and been soundly flogged together, more by token, any time this forty years? And now is news so plenty, that thou darest to defraud me of a morsel?

2d Monk. I 'll tell thee — but be secret. I knew a man hard by the convent (names are dangerous, and a bird of the air shall carry the matter), one that hath a mighty eye for a heretic, if thou knowest him.

1st Monk. Who carries his poll screwed on over-tight, and sits with his eyes shut in chapel?

2d Monk. The same. Such a one to be in evil savor — to have the splendor of the pontifical countenance turned from him, as though he had

taken Christians for Amalekites, and slain the people of the Lord.

1st Monk. How now?

2d Monk. I only speak as I hear: for my sister's son is chaplain, for the time being, to a certain Archisacerdos, a foreigner, now lodging where thou knowest. The young man being hid, after some knavery, behind the arras, in come our quidam and that prelate. The quidam, surly and Saxon — the guest, smooth and Italian; his words softer than butter, yet very swords: that this quidam had "exceeded the bounds of his commission — launched out into wanton and lawless cruelty — burnt noble ladies unheard, of whose innocence the Holy See had proof — defiled the Catholic faith in the eyes of the weaker sort — and alienated the minds of many nobles and gentlemen" — and finally, that he who thinketh he standeth, were wise to take heed lest he fall.

1st Monk. And what said Conrad?

2d Monk. Out upon a man that cannot keep his lips! Who spake of Conrad? That quidam, however, answered nought, but — how "to his own master he stood or fell" — how "he labored not for the Pope but for the Papacy"; and so forth.

1st Monk. Here is awful doctrine! Behold the fruit of your reformers! This comes of their realized ideas, and centralizations, and organizations, till a monk cannot wink in chapel without being blinded with the lantern, or fall sick on Fridays, for fear of the rod. Have I not testified? Have I not foretold?

2d Monk. Thou hast indeed. Thou knowest that the old paths are best, and livest in most pious abhorrence of all amendment.

1st Monk. Do you hear that shout? There is the procession returning from the tomb.

2d Monk. Hark to the tramp of the horse-hoofs! A gallant show, I 'll warrant!

1st Monk. Time was, now, when we were young bloods together in the world, such a roll as that would have set our hearts beating against their cages!

2d Monk. Ay, ay. We have seen sport in our day; we have paraded and curvetted, eh? and heard scabbards jingle? We know the sly touch of the heel, that set him on his hind legs before the right window. *Vanitas vanitatum — omnia vanitas!* Here comes Gerard, Conrad's chaplain, with our dinner.

GERARD *enters across the Court.*

1st Monk. A kindly youth and a godly, but — reformation-bitten, like the rest.

2d Monk. Never care. Boys must take the reigning madness in religion, as they do the measles — once for all.

1st Monk. Once too often for him. His face is too, too like Abel's in the chapel-window. *Ut sis vitalis metuo, puer!*

Ger. Hail, fathers. I have asked permission of the prior to minister your refection, and bring you thereby the first news of the pageant.

1st Monk. Blessings on thee for a good boy. Give us the trenchers, and open thy mouth while we open ours.

2d Monk. Most splendid all, no doubt?

Ger. A garden, sir,
Wherein all rainbowed flowers were heaped together;

A sea of silk and gold, of blazoned banners,
And chargers housed; such glorious press, be sure,
Thuringen-land ne'er saw.

2d Monk. Just hear the boy!
Who rode beside the bier?

Ger. Frederic the Kaiser,
Henry the Landgrave, brother of her husband;
The Princesses, too, Agnes, and her mother;
And every noble name, sir, at whose war-cry
The Saxon heart leaps up; with them the prelates
Of Treves, of Cöln, and Maintz — why name them all?
When all were there, whom this our fatherland
Counts worthy of its love.

1st Monk. 'T was but her right.
Who spoke the oration?

Ger. Who but Conrad?

2d Monk. Well —
That's honor to our house.

1st Monk. Come, tell us all.

2d Monk. In order, boy: thou hast a ready tongue.

Ger. He raised from off her face the pall, and "Lo!"
He cried, "That saintly flesh which ye of late
With sacrilegious hands, ere yet entombed,
Had in your superstitious selfishness
Almost torn piecemeal. Fools! Gross-hearted fools!
These limbs are God's, not yours: in life for you
They spent themselves; now till the judgment-day
By virtue of the Spirit embalmed they lie —
Touch them who dare. No! Would you find your Saint,
Look up, not down, where even now she prays

Beyond that blazing orb for you and me.
Why hither bring her corpse? Why hide her clay
In jewelled ark beneath God's mercy-seat —
A speck of dust among these boundless aisles,
Uprushing pillars, star-bespangled roofs,
Whose colors mimic Heaven's unmeasured blue,
Save to remind you, how she is not here,
But risen with Him that rose, and by His blaze
Absorbed, lives in the God for whom she died?
Know her no more according to the flesh;
Or only so, to brand upon your thoughts
How she was once a woman — flesh and blood,
Like you — yet how unlike! Hark while I tell ye."

2d Monk. How liked the mob all this? They hate him sore.

Ger. Half awed, half sullen, till his golden lips
Entranced all ears with tales so sad and strange,
They seemed one life-long miracle: bliss and woe,
Honor and shame — her daring — Heaven's stern guidance,
Did each the other so outblaze.

1st Monk. Great signs
Did wait on her from youth.

2d Monk. There went a tale
Of one, a Zingar wizard, who, on her birthnight,
He here in Eisenach, she in Presburg lying,
Declared her natal moment, and the glory
Which should befall her by the grace of God.

Ger. He spoke of that, and many a wonder more,
Melting all hearts to worship — how a robe
Which from her shoulders, at a royal feast,
To some importunate as alms she sent,
By miracle within her bower was hung again:
And how on her own couch the Incarnate Son

In likeness of a leprous serf, she laid:
And many a wondrous tale, till now unheard;
Which, from her handmaid's oath and attestation,
Siegfried of Maintz to far Perugia sent,
And sainted Umbria's labyrinthine hills,
Even to the holy Council, where the Patriarchs
Of Antioch and Jerusalem, and with them
A host of prelates, magnates, knights, and nobles,
Decreed and canonized her sainthood's palm.

1st Monk. Mass, they could do no less.

Ger. So thought my master —
For, "Thus," quoth he, "the primates of the Faith
Have, in the bull which late was read to you,
Most wisely ratified the will of God
Revealed in her life's splendor: for the next count —
These miracles wherewith since death she shines —
Since ye must have your signs, ere ye believe,
And since without such tests the Roman Father
Allows no saints to take their seats in Heaven,
Why, there ye have them; not a friar, I find,
Or old wife in the streets, but counts some dozens
Of blind, deaf, halt, dumb, palsied, and hysterical,
Made whole at this her tomb. A corpse or two
Was raised, they say, last week: Will that content you?
Will that content her? Earthworms! Would ye please the dead,
Bring sinful souls, not limping carcasses
To test her power on; which of you hath done that?
Has any glutton learnt from her to fast?
Or oily burgher dealt away his pelf?
Has any painted Jezebel in sackcloth
Repented of her vanities? Your patron?

Think ye, that spell and flame of intercession,
Melting God's iron will, which for your sakes
She purchased by long agonies, was but meant
To save your doctor's bills? If any soul
Hath been by her made holier, let it speak!"

2d Monk. Well spoken, Legate! Easier asked than answered.

Ger. Not so, for on the moment, from the crowd
Sprang out a gay and gallant gentleman
Well known in fight and tourney, and aloud
With sobs and blushes told, how he long time
Had wallowed deep in mire of fleshly sin,
And loathed, and fell again, and loathed in vain;
Until the story of her saintly grace
Drew him unto her tomb; there long prostrate
With bitter cries he sought her, till at length
The image of her perfect loveliness
Transfigured all his soul, and from his knees
He rose new-born, and, since that blessed day,
In chastest chivalry, a spotless knight,
Maintains the widow's and the orphan's cause.

1st Monk. Well done! and what said Conrad?

Ger. Oh, he smiled,
As who should say, "'T was but the news I looked for."
Then, pointing to the banners borne on high,
Where the sad story of her nightly penance
Was all too truly painted — "Look!" he cried,
"'T was thus she schooled her soft and shuddering flesh
To dare and suffer for you!" Gay ladies sighed,
And stern knights wept, and growled, and wept again.
And then he told her alms, her mighty labors,

Among God's poor, the schools wherein she taught;
The babes she brought to the font, the hospitals
Founded from her own penury, where she tended
The leper and the fever-stricken serf
With meanest office; how a dying slave
Who craved in vain for milk she stooped to feed
From her own bosom. At that crowning tale
Of utter love, the dullest hearts caught fire
Contagious from his lips — the Spirit's breath
Low to the earth, like dewy-laden corn,
Bowed the ripe harvest of that mighty host;
Knees bent, all heads were bare; rich dames aloud
Bewailed their cushioned sloth; old foes held out
Long parted hands; low murmured vows and prayers
Gained courage, till a shout proclaimed her saint,
And jubilant thunders shook the ringing air,
Till birds dropped stunned, and passing clouds bewept
With crystal drops, like sympathizing angels,
Those wasted limbs, whose sainted ivory round
Shed Eden-odors: from his royal head
The Kaiser took his crown, and on the bier
Laid the rich offering; dames tore off their jewels —
Proud nobles heaped with gold and gems her corse
Whom living they despised: I saw no more ——
Mine eyes were blinded with a radiant mist —
And I ran here to tell you.

1st Monk. Oh, fair olive,
Rich with the Spirit's unction, how thy boughs
Rain balsams on us!

2d Monk. Thou didst sell thine all —
And bought'st the priceless pearl!

1st Monk. Thou holocaust of Abel.
By Cain in vain despised!
2d Monk. Thou angels' playmate
Of yore, but now their judge!
Ger. Thou alabaster,
Broken at last, to fill the house of God
With rich celestial fragrance!
[*Etc. etc., ad libitum.*

Scene II

A Room in a Convent at Mayence. Conrad *alone.*

Con. The work is done! Diva Elizabeth!
And I have trained one saint before I die!
Yet now 't is done, is 't well done? On my lips
Is triumph; but what echo in my heart?
Alas! the inner voice is sad and dull,
Even at the crown and shout of victory.
Oh! I had hugged this purpose to my heart,
Cast by for it all ruth, all pride, all scruples;
Yet now its face, that seemed as pure as crystal,
Shows fleshly, foul, and stained with tears and gore!
We make, and moil, like children in their gardens,
And spoil with dabbled hands, our flowers i' the planting.
And yet a saint is made! Alas, those children!
Was there no gentler way? I know not any:
I plucked the gay moth from the spider's web;
What if my hasty hand have smirched its feathers?
Sure, if the whole be good, each several part
May for its private blots forgiveness gain,
As in man's tabernacle, vile elements
Unite to one fair stature. Who 'll gainsay it?

The whole is good; another saint in heaven;
Another bride within the Bridegroom's arms;
And she will pray for me! — And yet what matter?
Better that I, this paltry sinful unit,
Fall fighting, crushed into the nether pit,
If my dead corpse may bridge the path to Heaven,
And damn itself, to save the souls of others.
A noble ruin: yet small comfort in it;
In it, or in aught else —
A blank dim cloud before mine inward sense
Dulls all the past: she spoke of such a cloud —
I struck her for't, and said it was a fiend —
She's happy now, before the throne of God —
I should be merry; yet my heart's floor sinks
As on a fast day; sure some evil bodes.
Would it were here, that I might see its eyes!
The future only is unbearable!
We quail before the rising thunderstorm
Which thrills and whispers in the stifled air,
Yet blench not, when it falls. Would it were here!

[*Pause.*]

I fain would sleep, yet dare not: all the air
Throngs thick upon me with the pregnant terror
Of life unseen, yet near. I dare not meet them,
As if I sleep I shall do — I again?
What matter what I feel, or like, or fear?
Come what God sends. Within there — Brother Gerard!

GERARD *enters.*

Watch here an hour, and pray. — The fiends are busy.
So — hold my hand. (*Crosses himself.*) Come on, I fear you not. [*Sleeps.*

GERARD *sings.*

Qui fugiens mundi gravia
Contempsit carnis bravia,
Cupidinisque somnia,
Lucratur, perdens, omnia.

Hunc gestant ulnis angeli,
Ne lapis officiat pedi;
Ne luce timor occupet,
Aut nocte pestis incubet.

Huic cœli lilia germinant;
Arrisus sponsi permanent;
Ac nomen in fidelibus
Quam filiorum medius. [*Sleeps.*

. . . . . .

Conrad (*awaking*). Stay! Spirits, stay! Art thou a hell-born phantasm,
Or word too true, sent by the mother of God?
Oh, tell me, queen of Heaven!
O God! if she, the city of the Lord,
Who is the heart, the brain, the ruling soul
Of half the earth; wherein all kingdoms, laws,
Authority, and faith do culminate,
And draw from her their sanction and their use;
The lighthouse founded on the rock of ages,
Whereto the Gentiles look, and still are healed;
The tree whose rootlets drink of every river,
Whose boughs drop Eden fruits on seaward isles;
Christ's seamless coat, rainbowed with gems and hues
Of all degrees and uses, rend, and tarnish,
And crumble into dust!
Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas?

Oh! to have prayed, and toiled — and lied — for this!
For this to have crushed out the heart of youth,
And sat by calm, while living bodies burned!
How! Gerard; sleeping!
Couldst thou not watch with me one hour, my son?
Ger. (*awaking*). How! have I slept? Shame on my vaporous brain!
And yet there crept along my hand from thine
A leaden languor, and the drowsy air
Teemed thick with humming wings — I slept perforce.
Forgive me (while for breach of holy rule
Due penance shall seem honor) my neglect.
Con. I should have beat thee for 't an hour agone —
Now I judge no man. What are rules and methods?
I have seen things which make my brain-sphere reel:
My magic teraph-bust, full-packed, and labelled,
With saws, ideas, dogmas, ends, and theories,
Lies shivered into dust. Pah! we do squint
Each through his loophole, and then dream, broad heaven
Is but the patch we see. But let none know;
Be silent, Gerard, wary.
Ger. Nay — I know nought
Of that which moves thee: though I fain would ask —
Con. I saw our mighty Mother, Holy Church,
Sit like a painted harlot: round her limbs
An oily snake had coiled, who smiled, and smiled,
And lisped the name of Jesus — I 'll not tell thee:
I have seen more than man can see, and live:
God, when He grants the tree of knowledge, bans

The luckless seer from off the tree of life,
Lest he become as gods, and burst with pride;
Or sick at sight of his own nothingness,
Lie down, and be a fiend: my time is near:
Well — I have neither child, nor kin, nor friend,
Save thee, my son; I shall go lightly forth.
Thou knowest we start for Marpurg on the morrow?
Thou wilt go with me?

Ger. Ay, to death, my master;
Yet boorish heretics, with grounded throats,
Mutter like sullen bulls; the Count of Saym,
And many gentlemen, they say, have sworn
A fearful oath: there 's danger in the wind.

Con. They have their quarrel; I was keen and hasty:
Gladio qui utitur, peribit gladio.
When Heaven is strong, then Hell is strong: Thou fear'st not?

Ger. No! though their name were legion! 'T is for thee
Alone I quake, lest by some pious boldness
Thou quench the light of Israel.

Con. Light? my son!
There shall no light be quenched, when I lie dark.
Our path trends outward: we will forth to-morrow.
Now let 's to chapel; matin bells are ringing.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene III

A road between Eisenach and Marpurg. Peasants waiting by the road-side. Walter of Varila, *the* Count of Saym, *and other Gentlemen entering on horseback.*

Gent. Talk not of honor — Hell 's a flame within me:
Foul water quenches fire as well as fair;
If I do meet him he shall die the death,
Come fair, come foul: I tell you, there are wrongs
The fumbling piecemeal law can never touch,
Which bring of hemselves to the injured, right divine,
Straight from the fount of right, above all parchments,
To be their own avengers: dainty lawyers,
If one shall slay the adulterer in the act,
Dare not condemn him: girls have stabbed their tyrants,
And common sense has crowned them saints; yet what —
What were their wrongs to mine? All gone! All gone!
My noble boys, whom I had trained, poor fools,
To win their spurs, and ride afield with me!
I could have spared them — but my wife! my lady!
Those dainty limbs, which no eyes but mine —
Before that ruffian mob — Too much for man!
Too much, stern Heaven! — Those eyes, those hands,
Those tender feet, where I have lain and worshipped —

Food for fierce flames! And on the self-same day —
The day that they were seized — unheard — unargued —
No witness, but one vile convicted thief —
The dog is dead and buried: Well done, henchmen!
They are not buried! Pah! their ashes flit
About the common air; we pass them — breathe them!
The self-same day! If I had had one look!
One word — one single tiny spark of word,
Such as two swallows change upon the wing!
She was no heretic: she knelt for ever
Before the blessed rood, and prayed for me.
Art sure he comes this road?

C. Saym. My messenger
Saw him start forth, and watched him past the crossways.
An hour will bring him here.

C. Wal. How! ambuscading?
I 'll not sit by, while helpless priests are butchered.
Shame, gentles!

C. Saym. On my word, I knew not on 't
Until this hour: my quarrel 's not so sharp,
But I may let him pass: my name is righted
Before the Emperor, from all his slanders;
And what 's revenge to me?

Gent. Ay, ay — forgive and forget —
The vermin 's trapped — and we 'll be gentle-handed,
And lift him out, and bid his master speed him,
Him and his firebrands. He shall never pass me.

C. Wal. I will not see it; I 'm old, and sick of blood.

She loved him, while she lived; and charged me once,
As her sworn liegeman, not to harm the knave.
I 'll home: yet, knights, if aught untoward happen,
And you should need a shelter, come to me:
My walls are strong. Home, knaves! we 'll seek our wives,
And beat our swords to ploughshares — when folks let us.

[*Exeunt* COUNT WALTER *and Suite.*

C. Saym. He 's gone, brave heart! — But — sir, you will not dare?
The Pope's own Legate — think — there's danger in 't.

Gent. Look, how athwart yon sullen sleeping flats
That frowning thunder-cloud sails pregnant hither; —
And black against its sheeted gray, one bird
Flags fearful onward — 'T is his cursed soul!
Now thou shalt quake, raven! — The self-same day!
He cannot 'scape! The storm is close upon him!
There! There! the wreathing spouts have swallowed him!
He 's gone! and see, the keen blue spark leaps out
From crag to crag, and every vaporous pillar
Shouts forth his death-doom! 'T is a sign, a sign!

[*A heretic preacher mounts a stone. Peasants gather round him.*]

These are the starved unlettered hinds, forsooth,
He hunted down like vermin —for a doctrine.
They have their rights, their wrongs; their lawless laws,
Their witless arguings, which unconcious reason
Informs to just conclusions. We will hear them.

Preacher. My brethren, I have a message to you: therefore hearken with all your ears — for now is the day of salvation. It is written, that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light — and truly: for the children of this world, when they are troubled with vermin, catch them — and hear no more of them. But you, the children of light, the elect saints, the poor of this world rich in faith, let the vermin eat your lives out, and then fall down and worship them afterwards. You are all besotted — hag-ridden — drunkards sitting in the stocks, and bowing down to the said stocks, and making a god thereof. Of part, said the prophet, ye make a god, and part serveth to roast — to roast the flesh of your sons and of your daughters; and then ye cry, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire;" and a special fire ye have seen! The ashes of your wives and of your brothers cleave to your clothes. — Cast them up to Heaven, cry aloud, and quit yourselves like men!

Gent. He speaks God's truth! We are Heaven's justicers!

Our woes anoint us kings! Peace — Hark again! —

Preacher. Therefore, as said before — in the next place — It is written, that there shall be a two-edged sword in the hand of the saints. But the saints have but two swords — Was there a sword or shield found among ten thousand in Israel? Then let Israel use his fists, say I, the preacher! For this man hath shed blood, and by man shall his blood be shed. Now behold an argument. — This man hath shed blood, even Conrad; ergo, as he saith himself, ye, if ye are men, shall shed his blood. Doth he not himself say ergo?

Hath he not said ergo to the poor saints, to your sons and your daughters, whom he hath burned in the fire to Moloch? "Ergo, thou art a heretic" — "Ergo, thou shalt burn." Is he not therefore convicted out of his own mouth? Arise, therefore, be valiant — for this day he is delivered into your hand!

[*Chanting heard in the distance.*]

Peasant. Hush! here the psalm-singers come!

CONRAD *enters on a mule, chanting the psalter,* GERARD *following.*

Con. My peace with you, my children!

1st Voice. Psalm us no psalms; bless us no devil's blessings:
Your balms will break our heads. [*A murmur rises.*

2d Voice. You are welcome, sir; we are a-waiting for you.

3d Voice. Has he been shriven to-day?

4th Voice. Where is your ergo, Master Conrad? Faugh!
How both the fellows smell of smoke!

5th Voice. A strange leech he, to suck, and suck, and suck,
And look no fatter for't!

Old Woman. Give me back my sons!

Old Man. Give me back the light of mine eyes,
Mine only daughter!
My only one! He hurled her over the cliffs!
Avenge me, lads, you are young!

4th Voice. We will, we will: why smit'st him not, thou with the pole-axe?

3d Voice. Nay, now, the first blow costs most, and heals last:
Besides, the dog's a priest, at worst.

C. Saym. Mass! How the shaveling rascal stands at bay!
There 's not a rogue of them dare face his eye!
True *Domini canes!* 'Ware the bloodhound's teeth, curs!
Preacher. What! Are ye afraid? The huntsman 's here at last
Without his whip! Down with him, craven hounds!
I'll help you to 't. [*Springs from the stone.*
Gent. Ay, down with him! Mass, have these yelping boors
More heart than I? [*Spurs his horse forward.*
Mob. A knight! a champion!
Voice. He 's not mortal man!
See how his eyes shine! 'T is the archangel!
St. Michael come to the rescue! Ho! St. Michael!

[*He lunges at* CONRAD. GERARD *turns the lance aside, and throws his arms round* CONRAD.]

Ger. My master! my master! The chariot of Israel and the horses thereof!
Oh call down fire from Heaven!

[*A peasant strikes down* GERARD. CONRAD, *over the body.*]

Alas! my son! This blood shall cry for vengeance
Before the throne of God!
Gent. And cry in vain!
Follow thy minion! Join Folquet in hell!
[*Bears* CONRAD *down on his lance-point.*
Con. I am the vicar of the Vicar of Christ:
Who touches me doth touch the Son of God.
[*The mob close over him.*]
Oh God! a martyr's crown! Elizabeth! [*Dies.*

NOTES TO THE SAINT'S TRAGEDY

ACT I

THE references, unless it be otherwise specified, are to the *Eight Books concerning Saint Elizabeth, by Dietrich the Thuringian;* in Basnage's *Canisius,* Vol. IV. p. 113 (Antwerp, 1725).

Page 1. Cf. Lib. I. § 3. Dietrich is eloquent about her youthful inclination for holy places, and church doors, even when shut, and gives many real proofs of her "sanctæ indolis," from the very cradle.

P. 2. "St. John's sworn maid." Cf. Lib. I. § 4. "She chose by lot for her patron, St. John the protector of virginity."

Ibid. "Fit for my princess." Cf. Lib. I. § 2. "He sent with his daughter vessels of gold, silver baths, jewels, *pillows all of silk.* No such things, so precious or so many, were ever seen in Thuringen-land."

P. 3. "Most friendless." Cf. Lib. I. §§ 5, 6. "The courtiers used bitterly to insult her, etc. Her mother and sister-in-law, given to worldly pomp, differed from her exceedingly;" and much more concerning "the persecutions which she endured patiently in youth."

P. 4. "In one cradle." Cf. Lib. I. § 2. "The princess was laid in the cradle of her boy-spouse," and, says another, "the infants embraced with smiles, from whence the bystanders drew a joyful omen of their future happiness."

Ibid. "If thou love him." Cf. Lib. I. § 6. "The Lord by His hidden inspiration so inclined towards her the heart of the prince, that in the solitude of secret and mutual love he used to speak sweetly to her heart, with kindness and consolation; and was always wont, on returning home, to honor her with presents, and soothe her with embraces." It was their custom, says Dietrich, to the last to call each other in common conversation "Brother" and "Sister."

P. 5. "To his charge." Cf. Lib. I. § 7. "Walter of Varila, a good man, who, having been sent by the prince's father into Hungary, had brought the blessed Elizabeth into Thuringen-land."

P. 6. "The blind archer, Love." For information about the pagan orientalism of the Troubadours, the blasphemous bombast by which they provoked their persecution in Provence, and their influence on the Courts of Europe, see Sismondi, *Lit. Southern Europe*, Cap. III.–VI.

P. 9. "Stadings." The Stadings, according to Fleury, in A.D. 1233, were certain unruly fenmen, who refused to pay tithes, committed great cruelties on religious of both sexes, worshipped, or were said to worship, a black cat, etc., considered the devil as a very ill-used personage, and the rightful lord of themselves and the world, and were of the most profligate morals. An impartial and philosophic investigation of this and other early continental heresies is much wanted.

P. 20. "All gold." Cf. Lib. I. § 7, for Walter's interference and Lewis's answer, which I have paraphrased.

P. 22. "Is crowned with thorns." Cf. Lib. I. § 5, for this anecdote and her defence, which I have in like manner paraphrased.

P. 23. "Their pardon." Cf. Lib. I. § 3, for this quaint method of self-humiliation.

Ibid. "You know your place." Cf. Lib. I. § 6. "The vassals and relations of her betrothed persecuted her openly, and plotted to send her back to her father divorced. . . . Sophia also did all she could to place her in a convent. . . . She delighted in the company of maids and servants, so that Sophia used to say sneeringly to her, 'You should have been counted among the slaves who drudge, and not among the princes who rule.'"

P. 25. "Childish laughter." Cf. Lib. I. § 7. "The holy maiden, receiving the mirror, showed her joy by delighted laughter:" and again, II. § 8, "They loved each other in the charity of the Lord, to a degree beyond all belief."

P. 26. "A crystal clear." Cf. Lib. I. § 7.

P. 28. "Our fairest bride." Cf. Lib. I. § 8. "No one henceforth dared oppose the marriage by word or plot, . . . and all mouths were stopped."

ACT II

Pp. 30–35. Cf. Lib. II. §§ 1, 5, 11, *et passim.*

Hitherto, my notes have been a careful selection of the few grains of characteristic fact which I could find among Dietrich's lengthy professional reflections; but the chapter on which this scene is founded is remarkable enough to be given whole, and as I have a long-standing friendship for the good old monk, who is full of honest naïveté and deep-hearted sympathy, and have no wish to disgust *all* my readers with him, I shall give it for the most part untranslated. In the meantime those who may be shocked at certain expressions in this poem, borrowed from the Romish devotional school, may verify my language at the Romish booksellers', who find just now a rapidly increasing sale for such ware. And is it not after all a hopeful sign for the age that even the most questionable literary tastes must nowadays ally themselves with religion — that the hotbed imaginations which used to batten on Rousseau and Byron have now risen at least as high as the *Vies des Saints* and St. François de Sales' Philothea? The truth is, that in such a time as this, in the dawn of an age of faith, whose future magnificence we may surely prognosticate from the slowness and complexity of its self-developing process, spiritual "Werterism," among other strange prolusions, must have its place. The emotions and the imaginations will assert their just right to be fed — by foul means if not by fair; and even self-torture will have charms after the utter dryness and life-in-death of mere ecclesiastical pedantry. It is good, mournful though it be, that a few, even by gorging themselves with poison, should indicate the rise of a spiritual hunger — if we do but take their fate as a warning to provide wholesome food before the new craving has extended itself to the many. It is good that religion should have its Werterism, in order that hereafter Werterism may have its religion. But to my quotations — wherein the reader will judge how difficult it has been for me to satisfy at once the delicacy of the English mind and that historic truth which the highest art demands.

"Erat inter eos honorabile connubium, et thorus immaculatus, non in ardore libidinis, sed in conjugalis sanctimoniæ castitate. For the holy maiden, as soon as she was married, began to macerate her flesh with many watchings, rising every night to pray; her husband sometimes sleeping, sometimes conniving at her, often begging her, in compassion to her delicacy, not to afflict herself indiscreetly, often supporting her with his hand when she prayed." ("And," says another of her biographers, "being taught by her to pray with her.") "Great, truly, was the devotion of this young girl, who, rising from the bed of her carnal husband, sought Christ, whom she loved as the *true husband of her soul.*

"Nor certainly was there less faith in the husband who did not oppose such and so great a wife, but rather favored her, and tempered her fervor with over-kind prudence. Affected, therefore, by the sweetness of this modest love, and mutual society, they could not bear to be separated for any length of time or distance. The lady, therefore, frequently followed her husband through rough roads, and no small distances, and severe wind and weather, led rather by emotions of sincerity than of carnality: *for the chaste presence of a modest husband offered no obstacle to that devout spouse in the way of praying, watching, or otherwise doing good.*"

Then follows the story of her nurse waking Lewis instead of her, and Lewis's easy good-nature about this, as about every other event of life. "And so, after these unwearied watchings, it often happened that praying for an excessive length of time, she fell asleep on a mat beside her husband's bed, and being reproved for it by her maidens, answered: 'Though I cannot always pray, yet I can do violence to my own flesh by tearing myself in the meantime from my couch.'"

"Fugiebat oblectamenta carnalia, et ideò stratum molliorem, et *viri contubernium secretissimum, quantum licuit, declinavit. Quem quamvis præcordialis amoris affectu deligeret, querulabatur tamen dolens, quod virginalis decorem floris non meruit conservare.* Castigabat etiam plagis multis, et lacerabat diris verberibus carnem puella innocens et pudica.

"In principio quidem diebus quadragesimæ, sextisque feriis aliis occultas solebat accipere disciplinas, lætam coram hominibus se ostentans. *Post verò convalescens et proficiens in gratia,* deserto dilecti thoro surgens, fecit se in secreto cubi-

culo per ancillarum manus graviter sæpissime verberari, ad lectumque mariti reversa hilarem se exhibuit et jocundam.

"Vere felices conjuges, in quorum consortio tanta munditia, in colloquio pudicitia reperta est. In quibus amor Christi concupiscentiam extinxit, devotio refrenavit petulantiam, fervor spiritûs excussit somnolentiam, oratio tutavit conscientiam, charitas benefaciendi facultatem tribuit et lætitiam!"

P. 46. "In every scruple." Cf. Lib. III. § 9, how Lewis "consented that Elizabeth his wife should make a vow of obedience and continence at the will of the said Conrad, *salvâ jure matrimonii.*"

P. 47. "The open street." Cf. Lib. II. § 11. "On the Rogation days, when certain persons doing contrary to the decrees of the saints are decorated with precious and luxurious garments, the Princess, dressed in serge and barefooted, used to follow most devoutly the Procession of the Cross and the relics of the Saints, and place herself always at sermon among the poorest women; knowing (says Dietrich) that seeds cast into the valleys spring up into the richest crop of corn."

P. 48. "The poor of Christ." Cf. Lib. II. §§ 6, 11, *et passim.* Elizabeth's labors among the poor are too well known throughout one half at least of Christendom, where she is, *par excellence*, the patron of the poor, to need quotations.

P. 49. "I'll be thy pupil." Cf. Lib. II. § 4. "She used also, by words and examples, to oblige the worldly ladies who came to her to give up the vanity of the world, at least in some one particular."

P. 51. "Conrad enters." Cf. Lib. III. § 9, where this story of the disobeyed message and the punishment inflicted by Conrad for it, is told word for word.

P. 55. "Peaceably come by." Cf. Lib. II. § 6.

P. 56. "Bond-slaves." Cf. Note 11.

P. 59. "Elizabeth passes." Cf. Lib. II. § 5. "This most Christian mother, impletis *purgationis suæ* diebus, used to dress herself in serge, and taking in her arms her new-born child, used to go forth secretly, barefooted, by the difficult descent from the castle, by a rough and rocky road

to a remote church, carrying her infant in her own arms, after the example of the Virgin Mother, and offering him upon the altar to the Lord with a taper" (and with gold, says another biographer).

P. 61. "Give us bread." Cf. Lib. III. § 6. "A. D. 1225, while the Landgrave was gone to Italy to the Emperor, a severe famine arose throughout all Almaine; and lasting for nearly two years, destroyed many with hunger. Then Elizabeth, moved with compassion for the miserable, collected all the corn from her granaries, and distributed it as alms for the poor. She also built a hospital at the foot of the Wartburg, wherein she placed all those who could not wait for the general distribution. . . . She sold her own ornaments to feed the members of Christ. . . . Cuidam misero lac desideranti, ad mulgendum se præbuit!"

P. 72. "Ladies' tenderness." Cf. Lib. III. § 8. "When the courtiers and stewards complained on his return of the Lady Elizabeth's too great extravagance in almsgiving, 'Let her alone,' quoth he, 'to do good, and to give whatever she will for God's sake, only keep Wartburg and Neuenberg in my hands.'"

P. 81. "A crusader's cross." Cf. Lib. IV. § 1. "In the year 1227 there was a general 'Passagium' to the Holy Land, in which Frederick the Emperor also crossed the seas" (or rather did *not* cross the seas, says Heinrich Stero, in his annals, but having got as far as Sicily, came back again — miserably disappointing and breaking up the expedition, whereof the greater part died at the various ports — and was excommunicated for so doing); "and Lewis, landgrave of the Thuringians, took the cross likewise in the name of Jesus Christ, and . . . did not immediately fix the badge which he had received to his garment, as the matter is, lest his wife, who loved him with the most tender affection, seeing this, should be anxious and disturbed, . . . but she found it while turning over his purse, and fainted, struck down with a wonderful consternation."

P. 84. "I must be gone." Cf. Lib. IV. § 2. A chapter in which Dietrich rises into a truly noble and pathetic strain. "Coming to Schmalcald," he says, "Lewis found his dearest friends, whom he had ordered to meet him there, not wishing to depart without taking leave of them."

Then follows Dietrich's only poetic attempt, which Basnage calls a "*carmen ineptum*, foolish ballad," and most unfairly, as all readers should say, if I had any hope of doing justice in a translation to this genial fragment of an old dramatic ballad, and its simple objectivity, as of a writer so impressed (like all true Teutonic poets in those earnest days) with the pathos and greatness of his subject that he never tries to "improve" it by reflections, and preaching at his readers, but thinks it enough just to tell his story, sure that it will speak for itself to all hearts.

Quibus valefaciens cum mœrore
Commisit suis fratribus natos cum uxore:
Matremque deosculatos filiali more,
Vix eam alloquitur cordis præ dolore,
Illis mota viscera, corda tremuerunt,
Dum alter *in alterius colla irruerunt,*
Expetentes oscula, quæ vix receperunt
Propter multitudines, quæ eos compresserunt.
Mater tenens filium, uxorque maritum,
In diversa pertrahunt, et tenent invitum,
Fratres cum militibus velut compeditum
Stringunt, nec discedere sinunt expeditum.
Erat in exercitu maximus tumultus,
Cum *carorum cernerent alternari vultus.*
Flebant omnes pariter, senex et adultus,
Turbæ cum militibus, cultus et incultus.
Eja! Quis non plangeret, cum videret flentes
Tot honestos nobiles, tam diversas gentes,
Cum Thuringis Saxones illuc venientes,
Ut viderent socios suos abscedentes.
Amico luctamine cuncti certavere,
Quis eum diutius posset retinere;
Quidam collo brachiis, *quidam inhæsere*
Vestibus, nec poterat cuiquam respondere.
Tandem *se de manibus eximens suorum*
Magnatorum socius et peregrinorum,
Admixtus tandem cœtui cruce signatorum
Non visurus amplius terram Thuringorum!

Surely there is a heart of flesh in the old monk which, when warmed by a really healthy subject, can toss aside Scripture parodies and professional Stoic sentiment, and describe with such life and pathos, like any eye-witness, a scene which occurred, in fact, two years before his birth.

"And thus this *Prince of Peace*," he continues, "mount-

ing his horse with many knights, etc. . . . about the end of the month of June, set forth in the name of the Lord, praising him in heart and voice, and weeping and singing were heard side by side. And close by followed, with saddest heart, that most faithful lady after her sweetest prince, her most loving spouse, never, alas! to behold him more. And when she was going to return, the force of love and the agony of separation forced her on with him one day's journey: and yet that did not suffice. She went on, still unable to bear the parting, another full day's journey. . . . At last they part, at the exhortations of Rudolph the Cupbearer. What groans think you, what sobs, what struggles, and yearnings of the heart must there have been? Yet they part, and go on their way. . . . The Lord went forth exulting, as a giant to run his course; the lady returned lamenting, as a widow, and tears were on her cheeks. Then putting off the garments of joy, she took the dress of widowhood. The mistress of nations, sitting alone, she turned herself utterly to God — to her former good works, adding better ones."

Their children were "Hermann, who became Landgraf; a daughter who married the Duke of Brabant; another, who, remaining in virginity, became a nun of Aldenburg, of which place she is Lady Abbess until this day."

ACT III

P. 89. "On the freezing stone." Cf. Lib. II. § 5. "In the absence of her husband she used to lay aside her gay garments, conducted herself devoutly as a widow, and waited for the return of her beloved, passing her nights in watchings, genuflections, prayers, and disciplines." And again, Lib. IV. § 3, just quoted.

P. 91. "The will of God." Cf. Lib. IV. § 6. "The mother-in-law said to her daughter-in-law, 'Be brave, my beloved daughter; nor be disturbed at that which hath happened by divine ordinance to thy husband, my son.' Whereto she answered boldly, 'If my brother is captive, he can be freed by the help of God and our friends.' 'He is dead,'

quoth the other. Then she, clasping her hands upon her knees, 'The world is dead to me, and all that is pleasant in the world.' Having said this, suddenly springing up with tears, she rushed swiftly through the whole length of the palace, and being entirely beside herself, would have run on to the world's end, *usque quâque*, if a wall had not stopped her; and others coming up, led her away from the wall to which she had clung."

Ibid. "Yon lion's rage." Cf. Lib. III. § 2. "There was a certain lion in the court of the Prince; and it came to pass on a time that rising from his bed in the morning, and crossing the court dressed only in his gown and slippers, he met this lion loose and raging against him. He thereon threatened the beast with his raised fist, and rated it manfully, till laying aside its fierceness, it lay down at the knight's feet, and fawned on him, wagging its tail." So Dietrich.

Pp. 92-109. Cf. Lib. IV. § 7.
"Now shortly after the news of Lewis's death, certain vassals of her late husband (with Henry, her brother-in-law) cast her out of the castle and of all her possessions. . . . She took refuge that night in a certain tavern, . . . and went at midnight to the matins of the 'Minor Brothers.' . . . And when no one dare give her lodging, took refuge in the church. . . . And when her little ones were brought to her from the castle, amid most bitter frost, she knew not where to lay their heads. . . . She entered a priest's house, and fed her family miserably enough, by pawning what she had. There was in that town an enemy of hers, having a roomy house. . . . Whither she entered at his bidding, and was forced to dwell with her whole family in a very narrow space, . . . her host and hostess heaped her with annoyances and spite. She therefore bade them farewell, saying, 'I would willingly thank mankind if they would give me any reason for so doing.' So she returned to her former filthy cell."

P. 97. "White as whales' bone" (*i. e.* the tooth of the narwhal); a common simile in the older poets.

P. 102. "The nuns of Kitzingen." Cf. Lib. V. § 1. "After this, the noble Lady the Abbess of Kitzingen, Elizabeth's aunt according to the flesh, brought her away honorably to Eckembert, Lord Bishop of Bamberg."

P. 104. "Aged crone." Cf. Lib. IV. § 8, where this whole story is related word for word.

P. 108. "I 'd mar this face." Cf. Lib. V. § 1. "If I could not," said she, "escape by any other means, I would with my own hands cut off my nose, that so every man might loathe me when so foully disfigured."

P. 109. "Botenstain." Cf. *ibid.* "The bishop commanded that she should be taken to Botenstain with her maids, until he should give her away in marriage."

P. 110. "Bear children." *Ibid.* "The venerable man, knowing that the Apostle says, 'I will that the younger widows marry and bear children,' thought of giving her in marriage to some one — an intention which she perceived, and protested on the strength of her 'votum continentiæ.'"

P. 113. "The tented field." All records of the worthy Bishop on which I have fallen, describe him as "virum militiâ strenuissimum," a mighty man of war. We read of him, in Stero of Altaich's Chronicle, A. D. 1232, making war on the Duke of Carinthia, destroying many of his castles, and laying waste a great part of his land; and next year, being seized by some bailiff of the Duke's, and keeping that Lent in durance vile. In A. D. 1237, he was left by the Emperor as "vir magnanimus et bellicosus," in charge of Austria, during the troubles with Duke Frederick; and died in 1240.

P. 115. "Lewis's bones." Cf. Lib. V. § 3.

P. 119. "I thank thee." Cf. Lib. V. § 4. "What agony and love there was then in her heart, He alone can tell who knows the hearts of all the sons of men. I believe that her grief was renewed, and all her bones trembled, when she saw the bones of her beloved separated one from another (the corpse had been dug up at Otranto, and *boiled*). But though absorbed in so great a woe, at last she remembered God, and recovering her spirit said" — (Her words I have paraphrased as closely as possible).

Ibid. "The close hard by." Cf. Lib. V. § 4.

ACT IV

P. 121. "Your self-imposed vows." Cf. Lib. IV. § 1. "On Good Friday, when the altars were exhibited bare in remembrance of the Saviour who hung bare on the cross for us, she went into a certain chapel, and in the presence of Master Conrad, and certain Franciscan brothers, laying her holy hands on the bare altar, renounced her own will, her parents, children, relations, 'et omnibus hujus modi pompis,' all pomps of this kind (a misprint, one hopes, for mundi), in imitation of Christ; and 'omninò se exuit et nudavit,' stripped herself utterly naked, to follow Him naked, in the steps of poverty."

P. 125. "All worldly goods." A paraphrase of her own words.

P. 126. "Thine own needs." "But when she was going to renounce her possessions also, the prudent Conrad stopped her." The reflections which follow are Dietrich's own.

P. 127. "The likeness of the fiend," etc. I have put this daring expression into Conrad's mouth, as the ideal outcome of the teaching of Conrad's age on this point — and of much teaching also which miscalls itself Protestant, in our own age. The doctrine is not, of course, to be found *totidem verbis* in the formularies of any sect — yet almost all sects preach it, and quote Scripture for it as boldly as Conrad — the Romish Saint alone carries it honestly out into practice.

P. 129. "With pine boughs." Cf. Lib. VI. § 2. "Entering a certain desolate court, she betook herself, 'sub gradu cujusdam caminatæ,' to the projection of a certain furnace, where she roofed herself in with boughs. . . . In the meantime, in the town of Marpurg, was built for her a humble cottage of clay and timber."

Ibid. "Count Pama." Cf. Lib. VI. § 6.

P. 130. "Isentrudis and Guta." Cf. Lib. VII. § 4. "Now Conrad, as a prudent man, perceiving that this disciple of Christ wished to arrive at the highest pitch of perfection, studied to remove all which he thought would retard her,

. . . and therefore drove from her all those of her former household in whom she used to solace or delight herself. Thus the holy priest deprived this servant of God of all society, that so the constancy of her obedience might become known, and occasion might be given to her for clinging to God alone."

P. 131. "A leprous boy." Cf. Lib. VI. § 8.

She had several of these protégés, successively, whose diseases are too disgusting to be specified, on whom she lavished the most menial cares. All the other stories of her benevolence which occur in these two pages are related by Dietrich.

Ibid. "Mighty to save." Cf. Lib. VII. § 7. Where we read, amongst other matters, how the objects of her prayers used to become while she was speaking so intensely *hot*, that they not only smoked, and nearly melted, but burnt the fingers of those who touched them : from whence Dietrich bids us "learn with what an ardor of charity she used to burn, who would dry up with her heat the flow of worldly desire, and inflame to the love of eternity."

P. 134. "Lands and titles." Cf. Lib. V. §§ 7, 8.

P. 135. "Spinning wool." Cf. Lib. VI. § 6. "And crossing himself for wonder, the Count Pama cried out and said, 'Was it ever seen to this day that a king's daughter should spin wool?' All his messages from her father (says Dietrich) were of no avail."

P. 140. "To do her penance." Cf. Lib. VII. § 4. "Now he had placed with her certain austere women, from whom she endured much oppression patiently for Christ's sake, who, watching her rigidly, frequently reported her to her master for having transgressed her obedience in giving something to the poor, or begging others to give. And when thus accused she often received many blows from her master, insomuch that he used to strike her in the face, which she earnestly desired to endure patiently in memory of the stripes of the Lord."

P. 141. "That she dared not." Cf. Lib. VII. § 4. "When her most intimate friends, Isentrudis and Guta" (whom another account describes as in great poverty), "came to see her, she dared not give them anything, even for food, nor, without special license, salute them."

P. 142. "To bear within us." "Seeing in the church of certain monks who 'professed poverty' images sumptuously gilt, she said to about twenty-four of them, 'You had better to have spent this money on your own too and clothes, for we ought to have the reality of these images written in our hearts.' And if any one mentioned a beautiful image before her she used to say, 'I have no need of such an image. I carry the thing itself in my bosom.'"

Ibid. "Even on her bed." Cf. Lib. VI. §§ 5, 6.

P. 144. "My mother rose." Cf. Lib. VI. § 8. "Her mother, who had been long ago" (when Elizabeth was nine years old) "miserably slain by the Hungarians, appeared to her in her dreams upon her knees, and said, 'My beloved child! pray for the agonies which I suffer; for thou canst.' Elizabeth waking, prayed earnestly, and falling asleep again, her mother appeared to her and told her that she was freed, and that Elizabeth's prayers would hereafter benefit all who invoked her." Of the causes of her mother's murder the less that is said the better, but the prudent letter which the Bishop of Gran sent back when asked to join in the conspiracy against her is worthy notice. "*Reginam occidere nolite timere bonum est. Si omnes consentiunt ego non conrtadico.*" To be read as a full consent, or as a flat refusal, according to the success of the plot.

P. 145. "Any living soul." Dietrich has much on this point, headed, "How Master Conrad exercised Saint Elizabeth in the breaking of her own will. . . . And at last forbade her entirely to give alms; whereon she employed herself in washing lepers and other infirm folk. In the meantime she was languishing, and inwardly tortured with emotions of compassion."

I may here say that in representing Elizabeth's early death as accelerated by a "broken heart" I have, I believe, told the truth, though I find no hint of anything of the kind in Dietrich. The religious public of a petty town in the 13th century round the death-bed of a royal saint would of course treasure up most carefully all incidents connected with her latter days; but they would hardly record sentiments or expressions which might seem to their notions to derogate in any way from her saintship. Dietrich, too, looking at the subject as a monk and not as a man, would consider it just as much his duty to make her death-scene rapturous as to

make both her life and her tomb miraculous. I have composed these last scenes in the belief that Elizabeth and all her compeers will be recognized as real saints, in proportion as they are felt to have been real men and women.

P. 147. "Eructate sweet doctrine." The expressions are Dietrich's own.

Ibid. "In her coffin yet." Cf. Lib. VIII. § 1.

P. 148. "So she said." Cf. *ibid.*

Ibid. "The poor of Christ." "She begged her master to distribute all to the poor, except a worthless tunic in which she wished to be buried. She made no will: she would have no heir beside Christ" (*i.e.* the poor).

Ibid. "Martha and their brother," etc.

I have compressed the events of several days into one in this scene. I give Dietrich's own account, omitting his reflections.

"When she had been ill twelve days and more one of her maids sitting by her bed heard in her throat a very sweet sound, . . . and saying, 'Oh, my mistress, how sweetly thou didst sing!' she answered, 'I tell thee, I heard a little bird between me and the wall sing merrily; who with his sweet song so stirred me up that I could not but sing myself.'"

Again, § 3. "The last day she remained till evening most devout, having been made partaker of the celestial table, and inebriated with that most pure blood of life, which is Christ. The word of truth was continually on her lips, and opening her mouth of wisdom, she spake of the best things, which she had heard in sermons; eructating from her heart good words, and the law of clemency was heard on her tongue. She told from the abundance of her heart how the Lord Jesus condescended to console Mary and Martha at the raising again of their brother Lazarus, and then, speaking of His weeping with them over the dead, she eructated the memory of the abundance of the Lord's sweetness, *affectu et effectu* (in feeling and expression?). Certain religious persons who were present, hearing these words, fired with devotion by the grace which filled her lips, melted into tears. To whom the saint of God, now dying, recalled the sweet words of her Lord as He went to death, saying, 'Daughters of Jerusalem,' etc. Having said this she was silent. A wonderful thing. Then most sweet voices were heard in her throat, without

any motion of her lips; and she asked of those round, 'Did ye not hear some singing with me?' 'Whereon none of the faithful are allowed to doubt,' says Dietrich, 'when she herself heard the harmony of the heavenly hosts, etc. etc.' . . . From that time to twilight she lay, as if exultant and jubilant, showing signs of remarkable devotion, till the crowing of the cock. Then, as if secure in the Lord, she said to the bystanders, 'What should we do if the fiend showed himself to us?' And shortly afterwards, with a loud and clear voice, 'Fly! fly!' as if repelling the dæmon."

"At the cock-crow she said, 'Here is the hour in which the Virgin brought forth her child Jesus and laid him in a manger. . . . Let us talk of Him, and of that new star which He created by His omnipotence, which never before was seen.' 'For these' (says Montanus in her name) 'are the venerable mysteries of our faith, our richest blessings, our fairest ornaments: in these all the reason of our hope flourishes, faith grows, charity burns.'"

The novelty of the style and matter will, I hope, excuse its prolixity with most readers. If not, I have still my reasons for inserting the greater part of this chapter.

P. 152. "I demand it." How far I am justified in putting such fears into her mouth the reader may judge. Cf. Lib. VIII. § 5. "The devotion of the people demanding it, her body was left unburied till the fourth day in the midst of a multitude." . . .

"The flesh," says Dietrich, "had the tenderness of a living body, and was easily moved hither and thither at the will of those who handled it. . . . And many, sublime in the valor of their faith, tore off the hair of her head and the nails of her fingers ('even the tips of her ears, *et mamillarum papillas*,' says untranslatably Montanus of Spire), and kept them as relics." The reference relating to the pictures of her disciplines and the effect which they produced on the crowd I have unfortunately lost.

Ibid. "And yet no pain." Cf. Lib. VIII. § 4. "She said, 'Though I am weak I feel no disease or pain,' and so through that whole day and night, as hath been said, having been elevated with most holy affections of mind towards God, and inflamed in spirit with most divine utterances and conversations, at length she rested from jubilating, and inclining her head as if falling into a sweet sleep, expired."

ACT V.

P. 153. "Canonization." Cf. Lib. VIII. § 10. If I have in the last scene been guilty of a small anachronism, I have in this been guilty of a great one. Conrad was of course a prime means of Elizabeth's canonization, and, as Dietrich and his own "Letter to Pope Gregory the Ninth" show, collected, and pressed on the notice of the Archbishop of Maintz, the miraculous statements necessary for that honor. But he died two years before the actual publication of her canonization. It appeared to me that by following the exact facts I must either lose sight of the final triumph, which connects my heroine for ever with Germany and all Romish Christendom, and is the very culmination of the whole story, or relinquish my only opportunity of doing Conrad justice, by exhibiting the remaining side of his character.

I am afraid that I have erred, and that the most strict historic truth would have coincided, as usual, with the highest artistic effect, while it would only have corroborated the moral of my poem, supposing that there is one. But I was fettered by the poverty of my own imagination, and "do manus lectoribus."

P. 154. "Third Minors." The order of the Third Minors of St. Francis of Assisi was an invention of the comprehensive mind of that truly great man, by which "worldlings" were enabled to participate in the spiritual advantages of the Franciscan rule and discipline without neglect or suspension of their civic and family duties. But it was an institution too enlightened for its age; and family and civic ties were destined for a far nobler consecration. The order was persecuted and all but exterminated by the jealousy of the Regular Monks, not, it seems, without papal connivance. Within a few years after its foundation it numbered amongst its members the noblest knights and ladies of Christendom, St. Louis of France among the number.

P. 155. "Lest he fall." Cf. Fleury, *Eccl. Annals*, in Anno 1233. "Doctor Conrad of Marpurg, the King Henry, son of the Emperor Frederick, etc., called an Assembly at

Mayence to examine persons accused as heretics. Among whom the Count of Saym demanded a delay to justify himself. As for the others who did not appear, Conrad gave the cross to those who would take up arms against them. At which these supposed heretics were so irritated, that on his return they lay in wait for him near Marpurg, and killed him, with brother Gerard, of the order of Minors, a holy man. Conrad was accused of precipitation in his judgments, and of having burned *trop légèrement* under pretext of heresy, many noble and not noble, monks, nuns, burghers, and peasants. For he had them executed the same day that they were accused, without allowing any appeal."

P. 157. "The Kaiser." Cf. Lib. VIII. § 12, for a list of the worthies present.

P. 158. "A Zingar wizard." Cf. Lib. I. § 1. The magician's name was Klingsohr. He has been introduced by Novalis into his novel of *Heinrich Von Ofterdingen*, as present at the famous contest of the Minnesingers on the Wartburg. Here is Dietrich's account: —

"There were in those days in the Landgrave's court six knights, nobles, etc. etc., 'cantilenarum confectores summi,' song-wrights of the highest excellence" (either one of them or Klingsohr himself was the author of the Nibelungen-lied, and the Heldenbuch).

"Now there dwelt then in the parts of Hungary, in the land which is called the 'Seven Castles,' a certain rich nobleman, worth 3000 marks a year, a philosopher, practised from his youth in secular literature, but nevertheless learned in the sciences of Necromancy and Astronomy. This master Klingsohr was sent for by the Prince to judge between the songs of these knights aforesaid. Who, before he was introduced to the Landgrave, sitting one night in Eisenach, in the court of his lodging, looked very earnestly upon the stars, and being asked if he had perceived any secrets, 'Know that this night is born a daughter to the King of Hungary, who shall be called Elizabeth, and shall be a saint, and shall be given to wife to the son of this prince, in the fame of whose sanctity all the earth shall exult and be exalted.'

"See! — He who by Balaam the wizard foretold the mystery of his own incarnation, himself foretold by this wizard the name and birth of his fore-chosen handmaid Elizabeth." (A comparison, of which Basnage says, that

he cannot deny it to be intolerable.) I am not bound to explain all strange stories, but considering who and whence Klingsohr was, and the fact that the treaty of espousals took place two months afterwards, "adhuc sugens ubera desponsata est," it is not impossible that King Andrew and his sage vassal may have had some previous conversation on the destination of the unborn princess.

P. 158. "A robe." Cf. Lib. II. § 9, for this story, on which Dietrich observes, "Thus did her Heavenly Father clothe his lily Elizabeth, as Solomon in all his glory could not do."

Ibid. "The Incarnate Son." This story is told, I think, by Surius, and has been introduced, with an illustration by a German artist of the highest note, into a modern prose biography of this saint. (I have omitted much more of the same kind.)

P. 159. "Sainthood's palm." Cf. Lib. VIII. §§ 7, 8, 9. "While to declare the merits of his handmaid Elizabeth, in the place where her body rested, Almighty God was thus multiplying the badges of her virtues (*i.e.* miracles), two altars were built in her praise in that chapel, which while Siegfried, Archbishop of Mayence, was consecrating, as he had evidently been commanded in a vision, at the prayers of that devout man master Conrad, preacher of the word of God; the said preacher commanded all who had received any grace of healing from the merits of Elizabeth, to appear next day before the Archbishop and faithfully prove their assertions by witnesses. . . . Then the Most Holy Father, Pope Gregory the Ninth, having made diligent examination of the miracles transmitted to him, trusting at the same time to mature and prudent counsels, and the Holy Spirit's providence, above all, so ordaining, his clemency disposing, and his grace admonishing, decreed that the Blessed Elizabeth was to be written among the catalogue of the saints on earth, since in heaven she rejoices as written in the Book of Life." . . .

Then follow four chapters, headed severally—

§ 9. "Of the solemn canonization of the Blessed Elizabeth."

§ 10. "Of the translation of the Blessed Elizabeth (and

how the corpse when exposed diffused round a miraculous fragrance)."

§ 11. "Of the desire of the people to see, embrace, and kiss (says Dietrich) those sacred bones, the organs of the Holy Spirit, from which flowed so many graces of sanctities."

§ 12. "Of the sublime persons who were present, and their oblations."

§ 13. "A consideration of the divine mercy about this matter."

"Behold! she who despised the glory of the world, and refused the company of magnates, is magnificently honored by the dignity of the Pontifical office, and the reverent care of Imperial Majesty. And she who, seeking the lowest place in this life, sat on the ground, slept in the dust, is now raised on high, by the hands of Kings and Princes. . . . It transcends all heights of temporal glory, to have been made like the saints in glory. For all the rich among the people 'vultum ejus deprecantur' (pray for the light of her countenance), and kings and princes offer gifts, magnates adore her, and all nations serve her. Nor without reason, for 'she sold all and gave to the poor,' and counting all her substance for nothing, bought for herself this priceless pearl of eternity." One would be sorry to believe that such utterly mean considerations of selfish vanity, expressing as they do an extreme respect for the very pomps and vanities which they praise the saints for despising, really went to the making of any saint, Romish or other.

§ 14. "Of the sacred oil which flowed from the bones of Elizabeth. I subjoin the "Epilogus."

"Moreover, even as the elect handmaid of God, the most blessed Elizabeth, had shone during her life with wonderful signs of her virtues, so since the day of her blessed departure up to the present time, she is resplendent through the various quarters of the world with illustrious prodigies of miracles, the Divine power glorifying her. For to the blind, dumb, deaf, and lame, dropsical, possessed, and leprous, shipwrecked, and captives, 'ipsius meritis,' as a reward for her holy deeds, remedies are conferred. Also, to all diseases, necessities, and dangers, assistance is given. And, moreover, by the many corpses, '*puta sedecim*,' say sixteen,

wonderfully raised to life by herself, becomes known to the faithful the magnificence of the virtues of the Most High glorifying His saint. To that Most High be glory and honor forever. Amen."

So ends Dietrich's story. The reader has by this time, I hope, read enough to justify, in every sense, Conrad's "A corpse or two was raised, they say, last week," and much more of the funeral oration which I have put into his mouth.

P. 160. "Gallant Gentleman." Cf. Lib. VIII. § 6.

P. 161. "Took his crown." Cf. Lib. VIII. § 12.

Ibid. The "olive" and the "pearl" are Dietrich's own figures. The others follow the method of scriptural interpretation, usual in the writers of that age.

P. 172. "Domini canes," "The Lord's hounds," a punning sobriquet of the Dominican inquisitors, in allusion to their profession.

Ibid. "Folquet," Bishop of Toulouse, who had been in early life a Troubadour, distinguished himself by his ferocity and perfidy in the crusade against the Albigenses and Troubadours, especially at the surrender of Toulouse, in company with his chief abettor, the infamous Simon de Montfort. He died A. D. 1231. — See Sismondi, *Lit. of Southern Europe*, Cap. VI.

ANDROMEDA

OVER the sea, past Crete, on the Syrian shore
to the southward,
Dwells in the well-tilled lowland a dark-haired
Æthiop people,
Skilful with needle and loom, and the arts of the
dyer and carver,
Skilful, but feeble of heart; for they know not
the lords of Olympus,
Lovers of men; neither broad-browed Zeus, nor
Pallas Athené,
Teacher of wisdom to heroes, bestower of might
in the battle;
Share not the cunning of Hermes, nor list to the
songs of Apollo.
Fearing the stars of the sky, and the roll of the
blue salt water,
Fearing all things that have life in the womb of
the seas and the rivers,
Eating no fish to this day, nor ploughing the
main, like the Phœnics,
Manful with black-beaked ships, they abide in a
sorrowful region,
Vexed with the earthquake, and flame, and the
sea-floods, scourge of Poseidon.
Whelming the dwellings of men, and the toils
of the slow-footed oxen,
Drowning the barley and flax, and the hard-
earned gold of the harvest,

Up to the hillside vines, and the pastures skirting the woodland,
Inland the floods came yearly; and after the waters a monster,
Bred of the slime, like the worms which are bred from the slime of the Nile-bank,
Shapeless, a terror to see; and by night it swam out to the seaward,
Daily returning to feed with the dawn, and devoured of the fairest,
Cattle, and children, and maids, till the terrified people fled inland.
Fasting in sackcloth and ashes they came, both the king and his people,
Came to the mountain of oaks, to the house of the terrible sea-gods,
Hard by the gulf in the rocks, where of old the world-wide deluge
Sank to the inner abyss; and the lake where the fish of the goddess,
Holy, undying, abide; whom the priests feed daily with dainties.
There to the mystical fish, high-throned in her chamber of cedar,
Burnt they the fat of the flock; till the flame shone far to the seaward.
Three days fasting they prayed: but the fourth day the priests of the goddess,
Cunning in spells, cast lots, to discover the crime of the people.
All day long they cast, till the house of the monarch was taken,
Cepheus, king of the land; and the faces of all gathered blackness.
Then once more they cast; and Cassiopœia was taken,

Deep-bosomed wife of the king, whom oft far-seeing Apollo
Watched well-pleased from the welkin, the fairest of Æthiop women:
Fairest, save only her daughter; for down to the ankle her tresses
Rolled, blue-black as the night, ambrosial, joy to beholders.
Awful and fair she arose, most like in her coming to Here,
Queen before whom the Immortals arise, as she comes on Olympus,
Out of the chamber of gold, which her son Hephæstos has wrought her.
Such in her stature and eyes, and the broad white light of her forehead.
Stately she came from her place, and she spoke in the midst of the people.
"Pure are my hands from blood: most pure this heart in my bosom.
Yet one fault I remember this day; one word have I spoken;
Rashly I spoke on the shore, and I dread lest the sea should have heard it.
Watching my child at her bath, as she plunged in the joy of her girlhood,
Fairer I called her in pride than Atergati, queen of the ocean.
Judge ye if this be my sin, for I know none other." She ended;
Wrapping her head in her mantle she stood, and the people were silent.
Answered the dark-browed priests, "No word, once spoken, returneth,
Even if uttered unwitting. Shall gods excuse our rashness?

That which is done, that abides; and the wrath
of the sea is against us;
Hers, and the wrath of her brother, the Sun-god,
lord of the sheepfolds.
Fairer than her hast thou boasted thy daughter?
Ah folly! for hateful,
Hateful are they to the gods, whoso, impious,
liken a mortal,
Fair though he be, to their glory; and hateful is
that which is likened,
Grieving the eyes of their pride, and abominate,
doomed to their anger.
What shall be likened to gods? The unknown,
who deep in the darkness
Ever abide, twyformed, many-handed, terrible,
shapeless.
Woe to the queen; for the land is defiled, and the
people accursed.
Take thou her therefore by night, thou ill-starred
Cassiopœia,
Take her with us in the night, when the moon
sinks low to the westward;
Bind her aloft for a victim, a prey for the gorge
of the monster,
Far on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the
surges for ever;
So may the goddess accept her, and so may the
land make atonement,
Purged by her blood from its sin: so obey thou
the doom of the rulers."
Bitter in soul they went out, Cepheus and
Cassiopœia,
Bitter in soul; and their hearts whirled round, as
the leaves in the eddy.
Weak was the queen, and rebelled: but the king,
like a shepherd of people,

Willed not the land should waste; so he yielded
the life of his daughter.
Deep in the wane of the night, as the moon sank
low to the westward,
They by the shade of the cliffs, with the horror
of darkness around them,
Stole, as ashamed, to a deed which became not the
light of the sunshine,
Slowly, the priests, and the queen, and the virgin
bound in the galley.
Slowly they rowed to the rocks: but Cepheus far
in the palace
Sate in the midst of the hall, on his throne, like a
shepherd of people,
Choking his woe, dry-eyed, while the slaves wailed
loudly around him.
They on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the
surges for ever,
Set her in silence, the guiltless, aloft with her face
to the eastward.
Under a crag of the stone, where a ledge sloped
down to the water;
There they set Andromeden, most beautiful, shaped
like a goddess,
Lifting her long white arms wide-spread to the walls
of the basalt,
Chaining them, ruthless, with brass; and they
called on the might of the Rulers.
"Mystical fish of the seas, dread Queen whom
Æthiops honor,
Whelming the land in thy wrath, unavoidable, sharp
as the sting-ray,
Thou, and thy brother the Sun, brain-smiting, lord
of the sheepfold,
Scorching the earth all day, and then resting at
night in thy bosom,

Take ye this one life for many, appeased by the blood of a maiden,
Fairest, and born of the fairest, a queen, most priceless of victims."
Thrice they spat as they went by the maid: but her mother delaying
Fondled her child to the last, heart-crushed; and the warmth of her weeping
Fell on the breast of the maid, as her woe broke forth into wailing.
"Daughter! my daughter! forgive me! O curse not the murderess! Curse not!
How have I sinned, but in love? Do the gods grudge glory to mothers?
Loving I bore thee in vain in the fate-cursed bridebed of Cepheus,
Loving I fed thee and tended, and loving rejoiced in thy beauty,
Blessing thy limbs as I bathed them, and blessing thy locks as I combed them;
Decking thee, ripening to woman, I blest thee: yet blessing I slew thee!
How have I sinned, but in love? O swear to me, swear to thy mother,
Never to haunt me with curse, as I go to the grave in my sorrow,
Childless and lone: may the gods never send me another, to slay it!
See, I embrace thy knees — soft knees, where no babe will be fondled —
Swear to me never to curse me, the hapless one, not in the death-pang."
Weeping she clung to the knees of the maid; and the maid low answered —
"Curse thee! Not in the death-pang!" The heart of the lady was lightened.

Slowly she went by the ledge; and the maid was alone in the darkness.
Watching the pulse of the oars die down, as her own died with them,
Tearless, dumb with amaze she stood, as a storm-stunned nestling
Fallen from bough or from eave lies dumb, which the home-going herdsman
Fancies a stone, till he catches the light of its terrified eyeball.
So through the long long hours the maid stood helpless and hopeless,
Wide-eyed, downward gazing in vain at the black blank darkness.
Feebly at last she began, while wild thoughts bubbled within her —
"Guiltless I am: why thus, then? Are gods more ruthless than mortals?
Have they no mercy for youth? no love for the souls who have loved them?
Even as I loved thee, dread sea, as I played by thy margin,
Blessing thy wave as it cooled me, thy wind as it breathed on my forehead,
Bowing my head to thy tempest, and opening my heart to thy children,
Silvery fish, wreathed shell, and the strange lithe things of the water,
Tenderly casting them back, as they gasped on the beach in the sunshine,
Home to their mother — in vain! for mine sits childless in anguish!
Oh false sea! false sea! I dreamed what I dreamed of thy goodness;
Dreamed of a smile in thy gleam, of a laugh in the plash of thy ripple:

False and devouring thou art, and the great world dark and despiteful."
Awed by her own rash words she was still: and her eyes to the seaward
Looked for an answer of wrath: far off, in the heart of the darkness,
Bright white mists rose slowly; beneath them the wandering ocean
Glimmered and glowed to the deepest abyss; and the knees of the maiden
Trembled and sank in her fear, as afar, like a dawn in the midnight,
Rose from their seaweed chamber the choir of the mystical sea-maids.
Onward toward her they came, and her heart beat loud at their coming,
Watching the bliss of the gods, as they wakened the cliffs with their laughter.
Onward they came in their joy, and before them the roll of the surges
Sank, as the breeze sank dead, into smooth green foam-flecked marble,
Awed; and the crags of the cliff, and the pines of the mountain were silent.
Onward they came in their joy, and around them the lamps of the sea-nymphs,
Myriad fiery globes, swam panting and heaving; and rainbows
Crimson and azure and emerald, were broken in star-showers, lighting
Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the gardens of Nereus,
Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean.
Onward they came in their joy, more white than the foam which they scattered,

Laughing and singing, and tossing and twining, while eager, the Tritons
Blinded with kisses their eyes, unreproved, and above them in worship
Hovered the terns, and the seagulls swept past them on silvery pinions
Echoing softly their laughter; around them the wantoning dolphins
Sighed as they plunged, full of love; and the great sea-horses which bore them
Curved up their crests in their pride to the delicate arms of the maidens,
Pawing the spray into gems, till a fiery rainfall, unharming,
Sparkled and gleamed on the limbs of the nymphs, and the coils of the mermen.
  Onward they went in their joy, bathed round with the fiery coolness,
Needing nor sun nor moon, self-lighted, immortal: but others,
Pitiful, floated in silence apart; in their bosoms the sea-boys,
Slain by the wrath of the seas, swept down by the anger of Nereus;
Hapless, whom never again on strand or on quay shall their mothers
Welcome with garlands and vows to the temple, but wearily pining
Gaze over island and bay for the sails of the sunken; they heedless
Sleep in soft bosoms for ever, and dream of the surge and the sea-maids.
  Onward they passed in their joy; on their brows neither sorrow nor anger;
Self-sufficing, as gods, never heeding the woe of the maiden.

She would have shrieked for their mercy: but shame made her dumb; and their eyeballs
Stared on her careless and still, like the eyes in the house of the idols.
Seeing they saw not, and passed, like a dream, on the murmuring ripple.
Stunned by the wonder she gazed, wide-eyed, as the glory departed.
"Oh fair shapes! far fairer than I! Too fair to be ruthless!
Gladden mine eyes once more with your splendor, unlike to my fancies;
You, then, smiled in the sea-gleam, and laughed in the plash of the ripple.
Awful I deemed you and formless; inhuman, monstrous as idols;
Lo, when ye came, ye were women, more loving and lovelier, only;
Like in all else; and I blest you: why blest ye not me for my worship?
Had you no mercy for me, thus guiltless? Ye pitied the sea-boys:
Why not me, then, more hapless by far? Does your sight and your knowledge
End with the marge of the waves? Is the world which ye dwell in not our world?"

Over the mountain aloft ran a rush and a roll and a roaring;
Downward the breeze came indignant, and leapt with a howl to the water,
Roaring in cranny and crag, till the pillars and clefts of the basalt
Rang like a god-swept lyre, and her brain grew mad with the noises;

Crashing and lapping of waters, and sighing and tossing of weed-beds,
Gurgle and whisper and hiss of the foam, while thundering surges
Boomed in the wave-worn halls, as they champed at the roots of the mountain.
Hour after hour in the darkness the wind rushed fierce to the landward.
Drenching the maiden with spray; she shivering, weary and drooping,
Stood with her heart full of thoughts, till the foam-crests gleamed in the twilight,
Leaping and laughing around, and the east grew red with the dawning.
Then on the ridge of the hills rose the broad bright sun in his glory.
Hurling his arrows abroad on the glittering crests of the surges,
Gilding the soft round bosoms of wood, and the downs of the coastland;
Gilding the weeds at her feet, and the foam-laced teeth of the ledges,
Showing the maiden her home through the veil of her locks, as they floated
Glistening, damp with the spray, in a long black cloud to the landward.
High in the far-off glens rose thin blue curls from the homesteads;
Softly the low of the herds, and the pipe of the out-going herdsman,
Slid to her ear on the water, and melted her heart into weeping.
Shuddering, she tried to forget them; and straining her eyes to the seaward,
Watched for her doom, as she wailed, but in vain, to the terrible Sun-god.

"Dost thou not pity me, Sun, though thy wild dark sister be ruthless;
Dost thou not pity me here, as thou seest me desolate, weary,
Sickened with shame and despair, like a kid torn young from its mother?
What if my beauty insult thee, then blight it: but me — Oh spare me!
Spare me yet, ere he be here, fierce, tearing, unbearable! See me,
See me, how tender and soft, and thus helpless! See how I shudder,
Fancying only my doom. Wilt thou shine thus bright, when it takes me?
Are there no deaths save this, great Sun? No fiery arrow,
Lightning, or deep-mouthed wave? Why thus? What music in shrieking,
Pleasure in warm live limbs torn slowly? And dar'st thou behold them?
Oh, thou hast watched worse deeds! All sights are alike to thy brightness!
What if thou waken the birds to their song, dost thou waken no sorrow;
Waken no sick to their pain; no captive to wrench at his fetters?
Smile on the garden and fold, and on maidens who sing at the milking;
Flash into tapestried chambers, and peep in the eyelids of lovers,
Showing the blissful their bliss — Dost love, then, the place where thou smilest?
Lovest thou cities aflame, fierce blows, and the shrieks of the widow?
Lovest thou corpse-strewn fields, as thou lightest the path of the vulture?

Lovest thou these, that thou gazest so gay on my tears, and my mother's,
Laughing alike at the horror of one, and the bliss of another?
What dost thou care, in thy sky, for the joys and the sorrows of mortals?
Colder art thou than the nymphs: in thy broad bright eye is no seeing.
Hadst thou a soul — as much soul as the slaves in the house of my father,
Wouldst thou not save? Poor thralls! they pitied me, clung to me weeping,
Kissing my hands and my feet — What are gods, more ruthless than mortals?
Worse than the souls which they rule? Let me die: they war not with ashes!"
Sudden she ceased, with a shriek: in the spray, like a hovering foam-bow,
Hung, more fair than the foam-bow, a boy in the bloom of his manhood,
Golden-haired, ivory-limbed, ambrosial; over his shoulder
Hung for a veil of his beauty the gold-fringed folds of the goat-skin,
Bearing the brass of his shield, as the sun flashed clear on its clearness.
Curved on his thigh lay a falchion, and under the gleam of his helmet
Eyes more blue than the main shone awful; around him Athené
Shed in her love such grace, such state, and terrible daring.
Hovering over the water he came, upon glittering pinions,
Living, a wonder, outgrown from the tight-laced gold of his sandals;

Bounding from billow to billow, and sweeping the crests like a sea-gull;
Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he laughed in the joy of his leaping.
Fair and majestic he sprang to the rock; and the maiden in wonder
Gazed for a while, and then hid in the dark-rolling wave of her tresses,
Fearful, the light of her eyes; while the boy (for her sorrow had awed him)
Blushed at her blushes, and vanished, like mist on the cliffs at the sunrise.
Fearful at length she looked forth: he was gone: she, wild with amazement,
Wailed for her mother aloud: but the wail of the wind only answered.
Sudden he flashed into sight, by her side; in his pity and anger
Moist were his eyes; and his breath like a rose-bed, as bolder and bolder,
Hovering under her brows, like a swallow that haunts by the house-eaves,
Delicate-handed, he lifted the veil of her hair; while the maiden
Motionless, frozen with fear, wept loud; till his lips unclosing
Poured from their pearl-strung portal the musical wave of his wonder.
"Ah, well spoke she, the wise one, the gray-eyed Pallas Athené,—
"Known to Immortals alone are the prizes which lie for the heroes
Ready prepared at their feet; for requiring a little, the rulers
Pay back the loan tenfold to the man who, careless of pleasure,

Thirsting for honor and toil, fares forth on a perilous errand
Led by the guiding of gods, and strong in the strength of Immortals.
Thus have they led me to thee: from afar, unknowing, I marked thee,
Shining, a snow-white cross on the dark-green walls of the sea-cliff;
Carven in marble I deemed thee, a perfect work of the craftsman.
Likeness of Amphitrité, or far-famed Queen Cythereia.
Curious I came, till I saw how thy tresses streamed in the sea-wind,
Glistening, black as the night, and thy lips moved slow in thy wailing.
Speak again now — Oh speak! For my soul is stirred to avenge thee;
Tell me what barbarous horde, without law, unrighteous and heartless,
Hateful to gods and to men, thus have bound thee, a shame to the sunlight,
Scorn and prize to the sailor: but my prize now; for a coward,
Coward and shameless were he, who so finding a glorious jewel
Cast on the wayside by fools, would not win it and keep it and wear it,
Even as I will thee; for I swear by the head of my father,
Bearing thee over the sea-wave, to wed thee in Argos the fruitful,
Beautiful, meed of my toil no less than this head which I carry,
Hidden here fearful — Oh speak!"

But the maid, still dumb with amazement,
Watered her bosom with weeping, and longed for her home and her mother.
Beautiful, eager, he wooed her, and kissed off her tears as he hovered,
Roving at will, as a bee, on the brows of a rock nymph-haunted,
Garlanded over with vine, and acanthus, and clambering roses,
Cool in the fierce still noon, where streams glance clear in the mossbeds,
Hums on from blossom to blossom, and mingles the sweets as he tastes them.
Beautiful, eager, he kissed her, and clasped her yet closer and closer,
Praying her still to speak —
"Not cruel nor rough did my mother
Bear me to broad-browed Zeus in the depths of the brass-covered dungeon;
Neither in vain, as I think, have I talked with the cunning of Hermes,
Face unto face, as a friend; or from gray-eyed Pallas Athené
Learnt what is fit, and respecting myself, to respect in my dealings
Those whom the gods should love; so fear not; to chaste espousals
Only I woo thee, and swear, that a queen, and alone without rival
By me thou sittest in Argos of Hellas, throne of my fathers,
Worshipped by fair-haired kings: why callest thou still on thy mother?
Why did she leave thee thus here? For no foeman has bound thee; no foeman

Winning with strokes of the sword such a prize, would so leave it behind him."
Just as at first some colt, wild-eyed, with quivering nostril,
Plunges in fear of the curb, and the fluttering robes of the rider;
Soon, grown bold by despair, submits to the will of his master,
Tamer and tamer each hour, and at last, in the pride of obedience,
Answers the heel with a curvet, and arches his neck to be fondled,
Cowed by the need that maid grew tame; while the hero indignant
Tore at the fetters which held her: the brass, too cunningly tempered,
Held to the rock by the nails, deep wedged: till the boy, red with anger,
Drew from his ivory thigh, keen flashing, a falchion of diamond —
"Now let the work of the smith try strength with the arms of Immortals!"
Dazzling it fell; and the blade, as the vine-hook shears off the vine-bough,
Carved through the strength of the brass, till her arms fell soft on his shoulder.
Once she essayed to escape: but the ring of the water was round her,
Round her the ring of his arms; and despairing she sank on his bosom.
Then, like a fawn when startled, she looked with a shriek to the seaward.
"Touch me not, wretch that I am! For accursed, a shame and a hissing,
Guiltless, accurst no less, I await the revenge of the sea-gods.

Yonder it comes! Ah go! Let me perish unseen, if I perish!
Spare me the shame of thine eyes, when merciless fangs must tear me
Piecemeal! Enough to endure by myself in the light of the sunshine
Guiltless, the death of a kid!"
But the boy still lingered around her,
Loth, like a boy, to forego her, and waken the cliffs with his laughter.
"Yon is the foe, then? A beast of the sea? I had deemed him immortal.
Titan, or Proteus' self, or Nereus, foeman of sailors:
Yet would I fight with them all, but Poseidon, shaker of mountains,
Uncle of mine, whom I fear, as is fit; for he haunts on Olympus,
Holding the third of the world; and the gods all rise at his coming.
Unto none else will I yield, god-helped: how then to a monster,
Child of the earth and of night, unreasoning, shapeless, accursed?"
"Art thou, too, then a god?"
"No god I," smiling he answered;
"Mortal as thou, yet divine: but mortal the herds of the ocean,
Equal to men in that only, and less in all else; for they nourish
Blindly the life of the lips, untaught by the gods, without wisdom:
Shame if I fled before such!"

In her heart new life was enkindled,
Worship and trust, fair parents of love: but she answered him sighing.

"Beautiful, why wilt thou die? Is the light of the sun, then, so worthless,
Worthless to sport with thy fellows in flowery glades of the forest,
Under the broad green oaks, where never again shall I wander,
Tossing the ball with my maidens, or wreathing the altar in garlands,
Careless, with dances and songs, till the glens rang loud to our laughter.
Too full of death the sad earth is already: the halls full of weepers,
Quarried by tombs all cliffs, and the bones gleam white on the sea-floor,
Numberless, gnawn by the herds who attend on the pitiless sea-gods,
Even as mine will be soon: and yet noble it seems to me, dying,
Giving my life for a people, to save to the arms of their lovers
Maidens and youths for a while: thee, fairest of all, shall I slay thee?
Add not thy bones to the many, thus angering idly the dread ones!
Either the monster will crush, or the sea-queen's self overwhelm thee,
Vengeful, in tempest and foam, and the thundering walls of the surges.
Why wilt thou follow me down? can we love in the black blank darkness?
Love in the realms of the dead, in the land where all is forgotten?
Why wilt thou follow me down? is it joy, on the desolate oozes,
Meagre to flit, gray ghosts in the depths of the gray salt water?

Beautiful! why wilt thou die, and defraud fair girls of thy manhood?
Surely one waits for thee longing, afar in the isles of the ocean.
Go thy way; I mine; for the gods grudge pleasure to mortals."
Sobbing she ended her moan, as her neck, like a storm-bent lily,
Drooped with the weight of her woe, and her limbs sank, weary with watching,
Soft on the hard-ledged rock: but the boy, with his eye on the monster,
Clasped her, and stood, like a god; and his lips curved proud as he answered —
"Great are the pitiless sea-gods: but greater the Lords of Olympus;
Greater the Ægis-wielder, and greater is she who attends him.
Clear-eyed Justice her name is, the counsellor, loved of Athené;
Helper of heroes, who dare, in the god-given might of their manhood,
Greatly to do and to suffer, and far in the fens and the forests
Smite the devourers of men, Heaven-hated, brood of the giants,
Twyformed, strange, without like, who obey not the golden-haired Rulers.
Vainly rebelling they rage, till they die by the swords of the heroes,
Even as this must die; for I burn with the wrath of my father,
Wandering, led by Athené; and dare whatsoever betides me.
Led by Athené I won from the gray-haired terrible sisters

Secrets hidden from men, when I found them asleep on the sand-hills,
Keeping their eye and their tooth, till they showed me the perilous pathway
Over the waterless ocean, the valley that led to the Gorgon.
Here too I slew in my craft, Medusa, the beautiful horror;
Taught by Athené I slew her, and saw not herself, but her image,
Watching the mirror of brass, in the shield which a goddess had lent me.
Cleaving her brass-scaled throat, as she lay with her adders around her,
Fearless I bore off her head, in the folds of the mystical goat-skin
Hide of Amaltheié, fair nurse of the Ægis-wielder.
Hither I bear it, a gift to the gods, and a death to my foemen,
Freezing the seer to stone; to hide thine eyes from the horror.
Kiss me but once, and I go."
Then lifting her neck, like a sea-bird
Peering up over the wave, from the foam-white swells of her bosom,
Blushing she kissed him: afar, on the topmost Idalian summit,
Laughed in the joy of her heart, far-seeing, the queen Aphrodité.
Loosing his arms from her waist he flew upward, awaiting the sea-beast.
Onward it came from the southward, as bulky and black as a galley,
Lazily coasting along, as the fish fled leaping before it;

Lazily breasting the ripple, and watching by sand-bar and headland,
Listening for laughter of maidens at bleaching, or song of the fisher,
Children at play on the pebbles, or cattle that pawed on the sand-hills.
Rolling and dripping it came, where bedded in glistening purple
Cold on the cold sea-weeds lay the long white sides of the maiden,
Trembling, her face in her hands, and her tresses afloat on the water.
As when an osprey aloft, dark-eyebrowed, royally crested,
Flags on by creek and by cove, and in scorn of the anger of Nereus
Ranges the king of the shore; if he see on a glittering shallow,
Chasing the bass and the mullet, the fin of a wallowing dolphin,
Halting, he wheels round slowly, in doubt at the weight of his quarry,
Whether to clutch it alive, or to fall on the wretch like a plummet,
Stunning with terrible talon the life of the brain in the hindhead:
Then rushes up with a scream, and stooping the wrath of his eyebrows
Falls from the sky, like a star, while the wind rattles hoarse in his pinions.
Over him closes the foam for a moment; and then from the sand-bed
Rolls up the great fish, dead, and his side gleams white in the sunshine.
Thus fell the boy on the beast, unveiling the face of the Gorgon;

Thus fell the boy on the beast; thus rolled up the beast in his horror,
Once as the dead eyes glared into his; then his sides, death-sharpened,
Stiffened and stood, brown rock, in the wash of the wandering water.
Beautiful, eager, triumphant, he leapt back again to his treasure;
Leapt back again, full blest, toward arms spread wide to receive him.
Brimful of honor he clasped her, and brimful of love she caressed him,
Answering lip with lip; while above them the queen Aphrodité
Poured on their foreheads and limbs, unseen, ambrosial odors,
Givers of longing, and rapture, and chaste content in espousals.
Happy whom ere they be wedded anoints she, the queen Aphrodité!
Laughing she called to her sister, the chaste Tritonid Athené,
"Seest thou yonder thy pupil, thou maid of the Ægis-wielder?
How he has turned himself wholly to love, and caresses a damsel,
Dreaming no longer of honor, or danger, or Pallas Athené?
Sweeter, it seems, to the young my gifts are; so yield me the stripling;
Yield him me now, lest he die in his prime, like hapless Adonis."
Smiling she answered in turn, that chaste Tritonid Athené:
"Dear unto me, no less than to thee, is the wedlock of heroes;

Dear, who can worthily win him a wife not unworthy; and noble,
Pure with the pure to beget brave children, the like of their father.
Happy, who thus stands linked to the heroes who were, and who shall be;
Girdled with holiest awe, not sparing of self; for his mother
Watches his steps with the eyes of the gods; and his wife and his children
Move him to plan and to do in the farm and the camp and the council.
Thence comes weal to a nation: but woe upon woe when the people
Mingle in love at their will, like the brutes, not heeding the future."
Then from her gold-strung loom, where she wrought in her chamber of cedar,
Awful and fair she arose; and she went by the glens of Olympus;
Went by the isles of the sea, and the wind never ruffled her mantle;
Went by the water of Crete, and the black-beaked fleets of the Phœnics;
Came to the sea-girt rock which is washed by the surges for ever,
Bearing the wealth of the gods for a gift to the bride of a hero.
There she met Andromeden and Persea, shaped like Immortals;
Solemn and sweet was her smile, while their hearts beat loud at her coming;
Solemn and sweet was her smile, as she spoke to the pair in her wisdom.
"Three things hold we, the Rulers, who sit by the founts of Olympus,

Wisdom, and prowess, and beauty; and freely we pour them on mortals;
Pleased at our image in man, as a father at his in his children.
One thing only we grudge to mankind: when a hero, unthankful,
Boasts of our gifts as his own, stiff-necked, and dishonors the givers,
Turning our weapons against us. Him Até follows avenging;
Slowly she tracks him and sure, as a lyme-hound; sudden she grips him,
Crushing him, blind in his pride, for a sign and a terror to folly.
This we avenge, as is fit; in all else never weary of giving.
Come, then, damsel, and know if the gods grudge pleasure to mortals."
Loving and gentle she spoke: but the maid stood in awe, as the goddess
Plaited with soft swift finger her tresses, and decked her in jewels,
Armlet and anklet and earbell; and over her shoulders a necklace,
Heavy, enamelled, the flower of the gold and the brass of the mountain.
Trembling with joy she gazed, so well Hæphaistos had made it,
Deep in the forges of Ætna, while Charis his lady beside him,
Mingled her grace in his craft, as he wrought for his sister Athené.
Then on the brows of the maiden a veil bound Pallas Athené;
Ample it fell to her feet, deep-fringed, a wonder of weaving.

Ages and ages agone it was wrought on the heights of Olympus,
Wrought in the gold-strung loom, by the finger of cunning Athené.
In it she wove all creatures that teem in the womb of the ocean;
Nereid, siren, and triton, and dolphin, and arrowy fishes
Glittering round, many-hued, on the flame-red folds of the mantle.
In it she wove, too, a town where gray-haired kings sat in judgment;
Sceptre in hand in the market they sat, doing right by the people,
Wise: while above watched Justice, and near, far-seeing Apollo.
Round it she wove for a fringe all herbs of the earth and the water,
Violet, asphodel, ivy, and vine-leaves, roses and lilies,
Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean:
Now from Olympus she bore it, a dower to the bride of a hero.
Over the limbs of the damsel she wrapt it: the maid still trembled,
Shading her face with her hands; for the eyes of the goddess were awful.
Then, as a pine upon Ida when southwest winds blow landward,
Stately she bent to the damsel, and breathed on her: under her breathing
Taller and fairer she grew; and the goddess spoke in her wisdom.
"Courage I give thee; the heart of a queen, and the mind of Immortals;

Godlike to talk with the gods, and to look on their eyes unshrinking;
Fearing the sun and the stars no more, and the blue salt water;
Fearing us only, the lords of Olympus, friends of the heroes;
Chastely and wisely to govern thyself and thy house and thy people,
Bearing a god-like race to thy spouse, till dying I set thee
High for a star in the heavens, a sign and a hope to the seamen,
Spreading thy long white arms all night in the heights of the æther,
Hard by thy sire and the hero thy spouse, while near thee thy mother
Sits in her ivory chair, as she plaits ambrosial tresses.
All night long thou wilt shine; all day thou wilt feast on Olympus,
Happy, the guest of the gods, by thy husband, the god-begotten."
Blissful, they turned them to go: but the fair-tressed Pallas Athené
Rose, like a pillar of tall white cloud, toward silver Olympus;
Far above ocean and shore, and the peaks of the isles and the mainland;
Where no frost nor storm is, in clear blue windless abysses,
High in the home of the summer, the seats of the happy Immortals,
Shrouded in keen deep blaze, unapproachable; there ever youthful
Hebé, Harmonié, and the daughter of Jove, Aphrodité,

Whirled in the white-linked dance with the gold-crowned Hours and the Graces,
Hand within hand, while clear piped Phœbe, queen of the woodlands.
All day long they rejoiced: but Athené still in her chamber
Bent herself over her loom, as the stars rang loud to her singing,
Chanting of order and right, and of foresight, warden of nations;
Chanting of labor and craft, and of wealth in the port and the garner;
Chanting of valor and fame, and the man who can fall with the foremost,
Fighting for children and wife, and the field which his father bequeathed him.
Sweetly and solemnly sang she, and planned new lessons for mortals:
Happy, who hearing obey her, the wise unsullied Athené.

EVERSLEY, 1852.

HYPOTHESES HYPOCHONDRIACÆ [1]

And should she die, her grave should be
Upon the bare top of a sunny hill,
Among the moorlands of her own fair land,
Amid a ring of old and moss-grown stones
In gorse and heather all embosomed.
There should be no tall stone, no marble tomb
Above her gentle corse; — the ponderous pile
Would press too rudely on those fairy limbs.
The turf should lightly lie, that marked her home.
A sacred spot it would be — every bird
That came to watch her lone grave should be holy.
The deer should browse around her undisturbed;
The whin bird by, her lonely nest should build
All fearless; for in life she loved to see
Happiness in all things —
And we would come on summer days
When all around was bright, and set us down
And think of all that lay beneath that turf
On which the heedless moor-bird sits, and whistles
His long, shrill, painful song, as though he plained
For her that loved him and his pleasant hills;
And we would dream again of bygone days
Until our eyes should swell with natural tears
For brilliant hopes — all faded into air!
As, on the sands of Irāk, near approach

[1] This and the following poem were written at school in early boyhood.

Destroys the traveller's vision of still lakes,
And goodly streams reed-clad, and meadows green;
And leaves behind the drear reality
Of shadeless, same, yet everchanging sand!
And when the sullen clouds rose thick on high
Mountains on mountains rolling — and dark mist
Wrapped itself round the hill-tops like a shroud,
When on her grave swept by the moaning wind
Bending the heather-bells — then would I come
And watch by her, in silent loneliness,
And smile upon the storm — as knowing well
The lightning's flash would surely turn aside,
Nor mar the lowly mound, where peaceful sleeps
All that gave life and love to one fond heart!
I talk of things that are not; and if prayers
By night and day availed from my weak lips,
Then should they never be! till I was gone,
Before the friends I loved, to my long home.
O pardon me, if e'er I say too much; my mind
Too often strangely turns to ribald mirth,
As though I had no doubt nor hope beyond —
Or brooding melancholy cloys my soul
With thoughts of days misspent, of wasted time
And bitter feelings swallowed up in jests.
Then strange and fearful thoughts flit o'er my brain
By indistinctness made more terrible,
And incubi mock at me with fierce eyes
Upon my couch: and visions, crude and dire,
Of planets, suns, millions of miles, infinity,
Space, time, thought, being, blank nonentity,
Things incorporeal, fancies of the brain,
Seen, heard, as though they were material,
All mixed in sickening mazes, trouble me,
And lead my soul away from earth and heaven
Until I doubt whether I be or not!

And then I see all frightful shapes — lank ghosts,
Hydras, chimeras, krakens, wastes of sand,
Herbless and void of living voice — tall mountains
Cleaving the skies with height immeasurable,
On which perchance I climb for infinite years; broad seas,
Studded with islands numberless, that stretch
Beyond the regions of the sun, and fade
Away in distance vast, or dreary clouds,
Cold, dark, and watery, where wander I for ever!
Or space of ether, where I hang for aye!
A speck, an atom — inconsumable —
Immortal, hopeless, voiceless, powerless!
And oft I fancy, I am weak and old
And all who loved me, one by one, are dead,
And I am left alone — and cannot die!
Surely there is no rest on earth for souls
Whose dreams are like a madman's! I am young
And much is yet before me — after years
May bring peace with them to my weary heart!

HELSTON, 1835.

TREHILL WELL

THERE stood a low and ivied roof,
  As gazing rustics tell,
In times of chivalry and song
  'Yclept the holy well.

Above the ivies' branchlets gray
  In glistening clusters shone;
While round the base the grass-blades bright
  And spiry fox-glove sprung.

The brambles clung in graceful bands,
  Chequering the old gray stone
With shining leaflets, whose bright face
  In autumn's tinting shone.

Around the fountain's eastern base
  A babbling brooklet sped,
With sleepy murmur purling soft
  Adown its gravelly bed.

Within the cell the filmy ferns
  To woo the clear wave bent;
And cushioned mosses to the stone
  Their quaint embroidery lent.

The fountain's face lay still as glass
  Save where the streamlet free
Across the basin's gnarled lip
  Flowed ever silently.

Above the well a little nook
  Once held, as rustics tell,
All garland-decked, an image of
  The Lady of the Well.

They tell of tales of mystery,
  Of darkling deeds of woe;
But no! such doings might not brook
  The holy streamlet's flow.

Oh tell me not of bitter thoughts,
  Of melancholy dreams,
By that fair fount whose sunny wall
  Basks in the western beams.

When last I saw that little stream,
  A form of light there stood,
That seemed like a precious gem,
  Beneath that archway rude:

And as I gazed with love and awe
  Upon that sylph-like thing,
Methought that airy form must be
  The fairy of the spring.

HELSTON, 1835.

IN AN ILLUMINATED MISSAL[1]

I WOULD have loved: there are no mates in heaven;
I would be great: there is no pride in heaven;
I would have sung, as doth the nightingale
The summer's night beneath the moonè pale,
But Saintès hymnes alone in heaven prevail.
My love, my song, my skill, my high intent,
Have I within this seely book y-pent:
And all that beauty which from every part
I treasured still alway within mine heart,
Whether of form or face angelical,
Or herb or flower, or lofty cathedral,
Upon these sheets below doth lie y-spred,
In quaint devices deftly blazonèd.
Lord, in this tome to Thee I sanctify
The sinful fruits of worldly fantasy.

1839.

[1] Lines supposed to be found written in an illuminated missal.

THE WEIRD LADY

THE swevens came up round Harold the Earl,
  Like motes in the sunnés beam;
And over him stood the Weird Lady,
In her charmèd castle over the sea,
  Sang "Lie thou still and dream."

"Thy steed is dead in his stall, Earl Harold,
  Since thou hast been with me;
The rust has eaten thy harness bright,
And the rats have eaten thy greyhound light,
  That was so fair and free."

Mary Mother she stooped from heaven;
She wakened Earl Harold out of his sweven,
  To don his harness on;
And over the land and over the sea
He wended abroad to his own countrie,
  A weary way to gon.

O but his beard was white with eld,
  O but his hair was gray;
He stumbled on by stock and stone,
And as he journeyed he made his moan
  Along that weary way.

Earl Harold came to his castle wall;
  The gate was burnt with fire;
Roof and rafter were fallen down,
The folk were strangers all in the town,
  And strangers all in the shire.

Earl Harold came to a house of nuns,
  And he heard the dead-bell toll;
He saw the sexton stand by a grave;
"Now Christ have mercy, who did us save,
  Upon yon fair nun's soul."

The nuns they came from the convent gate
  By one, by two, by three;
They sang for the soul of a lady bright
Who died for the love of a traitor knight:
  It was his own lady.

He stayed the corpse beside the grave;
  "A sign, a sign!" quod he.
"Mary Mother who rulest heaven,
Send me a sign if I be forgiven
  By the woman who so loved me."

A white dove out of the coffin flew;
  Earl Harold's mouth it kist;
He fell on his face, wherever he stood;
And the white dove carried his soul to God
  Or ever the bearers wist.

DURHAM, 1839.

PALINODIA

Ye mountains, on whose torrent-furrowed slopes,
And bare and silent brows uplift to heaven,
I envied oft the soul which fills your wastes
Of pure and stern sublime, and still expanse
Unbroken by the petty incidents
Of noisy life: Oh hear me once again!

Winds, upon whose racked eddies, far aloft,
Above the murmur of the uneasy world,
My thoughts in exultation held their way:
Whose tremulous whispers through the rustling glade
Were once to me unearthly tones of love,
Joy without object, wordless music, stealing
Through all my soul, until my pulse beat fast
With aimless hope, and unexpressed desire —
Thou sea, who wast to me a prophet deep
Through all thy restless waves, and wasting shores,
Of silent labor, and eternal change;
First teacher of the dense immensity
Of ever-stirring life, in thy strange forms
Of fish, and shell, and worm, and oozy weed:
To me alike thy frenzy and thy sleep
Have been a deep and breathless joy: Oh hear!

Mountains, and winds, and waves, take back your child!
Upon thy balmy bosom, Mother Nature,

Where my young spirit dreamt its years away,
Give me once more to nestle: I have strayed
Far through another world, which is not thine.
Through sunless cities, and the weary haunts
Of smoke-grimed labor, and foul revelry
My flagging wing has swept. A mateless bird's
My pilgrimage has been; through sin, and doubt,
And darkness, seeking love. Oh hear me, Nature!
Receive me once again: but not alone;
No more alone, Great Mother! I have brought
One who has wandered, yet not sinned, like me.
Upon thy lap, twin children, let us lie;
And in the light of thine immortal eyes
Let our souls mingle, till The Father calls
To some eternal home the charge He gives thee.

CAMBRIDGE, 1841.

A HOPE

TWIN stars, aloft in ether clear,
  Around each other roll alway,
Within one common atmosphere
  Of their own mutual light and day.

And myriad happy eyes are bent
  Upon their changeless love alway;
As, strengthened by their one intent,
  They pour the flood of life and day.

So we through this world's waning night
  May, hand in hand, pursue our way;
Shed round us order, love, and light,
  And shine unto the perfect day.

1842.

THE POETRY OF A ROOT CROP

UNDERNEATH their eider-robe
Russet swede and golden globe,
Feathered carrot, burrowing deep,
Steadfast wait in charmèd sleep;
Treasure-houses wherein lie,
Locked by angels' alchemy,
Milk and hair, and blood, and bone,
Children of the barren stone;
Children of the flaming Air,
With his blue eye keen and bare,
Spirit-peopled smiling down
On frozen field and toiling town —
Toiling town that will not heed
God His voice for rage and greed;
Frozen fields that surpliced lie,
Gazing patient at the sky;
Like some marble carven nun,
With folded hands when work is done,
Who mute upon her tomb doth pray,
Till the resurrection day.

EVERSLEY, 1845.

CHILD BALLAD

JESUS, He loves one and all,
Jesus, He loves children small,
Their souls are waiting round His feet
On high, before His mercy-seat.

While He wandered here below
Children small to Him did go,
At His feet they knelt and prayed,
On their heads His hands He laid.

Came a Spirit on them then,
Better than of mighty men,
A Spirit faithful, pure and mild,
A Spirit fit for king and child.

Oh! that Spirit give to me,
Jesu Lord, where'er I be!

1845.

AIRLY BEACON

AIRLY Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
  While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
  Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
  With his baby on my knee!

1847.

SAPPHO

SHE lay among the myrtles on the cliff,
Above her glared the noon; beneath, the sea.
Upon the white horizon Atho's peak
Weltered in burning haze; all airs were dead;
The cicale slept among the tamarisk's hair;
The birds sat dumb and drooping. Far below
The lazy sea-weed glistened in the sun;
The lazy sea-fowl dried their steaming wings;
The lazy swell crept whispering up the ledge,
And sank again. Great Pan was laid to rest;
And Mother Earth watched by him as he slept,
And hushed her myriad children for a while.
She lay among the myrtles on the cliff;
And sighed for sleep, for sleep that would not hear,
But left her tossing still; for night and day
A mighty hunger yearned within her heart,
Till all her veins ran fever; and her cheek,
Her long thin hands, and ivory-channelled feet,
Were wasted with the wasting of her soul.
Then peevishly she flung her on her face,
And hid her eyeballs from the blinding glare,
And fingered at the grass, and tried to cool
Her crisp hot lips against the crisp hot sward:
And then she raised her head, and upward cast
Wild looks from homeless eyes, whose liquid light
Gleamed out between deep folds of blue-black hair,
As gleam twin lakes between the purple peaks

Of deep Parnassus, at the mournful moon.
Beside her lay her lyre. She snatched the shell,
And waked wild music from its silver strings;
Then tossed it sadly by. — "Ah, hush!" she cries;
"Dead offspring of the tortoise and the mine!
Why mock my discords with thine harmonies?
Although a thrice-Olympian lot be thine,
Only to echo back in every tone
The moods of nobler natures than thine own."

. . . . . .

EVERSLEY, 1847.
From "*Yeast.*"

THE YOUNG KNIGHT

A PARABLE

A GAY young knight in Burley stood,
Beside him pawed his steed so good,
His hands he wrung as he were wood,
With waiting for his love O!

"Oh, will she come, or will she stay,
Or will she waste the weary day
With fools who wish her far away,
And hate her for her love O?"

But by there came a mighty boar,
His jowl and tushes red with gore,
And on his curled snout he bore
A bracelet rich and rare O!

The knight he shrieked, he ran, he flew,
He searched the wild wood through and through,
But found nought save a mantle blue,
Low rolled within the brake O!

He twined the wild brier, red and white,
Upon his head the garland dight,
The green leaves withered black as night,
And burnt into his brain O!

A fire blazed up within his breast,
He mounted on an aimless quest,
He laid his virgin lance in rest,
And through the forest drove O!

By Rhinefield and by Osmondsleigh,
Through leat and furze brake fast drove he,
Until he saw the homeless sea,
That called with all its waves O!

He laughed aloud to hear the roar,
And rushed his horse adown the shore,
The deep surge rolled him o'er and o'er,
And swept him down the tide O!

NEW FOREST, *July* 12, 1847.

A NEW FOREST BALLAD

Oh she tripped over Ocknell plain,
  And down by Bradley Water;
And the fairest maid on the forest side
  Was Jane, the keeper's daughter.

She went and went through the broad gray lawns
  As down the red sun sank,
And chill as the scent of a new-made grave
  The mist smelt cold and dank.

"A token, a token!" that fair maid cried,
  "A token that bodes me sorrow;
For they that smell the grave by night
  Will see the corpse to-morrow.

"My own true love in Burley Walk
  Does hunt to-night, I fear;
And if he meet my father stern,
  His game may cost him dear.

"Ah, here's a curse on hare and grouse,
  A curse on hart and hind;
And a health to the squire in all England,
  Leaves never a head behind."

Her true love shot a mighty hart
  Among the standing rye,
When on him leapt that keeper old
  From the fern where he did lie.

The forest laws were sharp and stern,
  The forest blood was keen;
They lashed together for life and death
  Beneath the hollies green.

The metal good and the walnut wood
  Did soon in flinders flee;
They tost the orts to south and north,
  And grappled knee to knee.

They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
  They wrestled still and sore;
Beneath their feet the myrtle sweet
  Was stamped to mud and gore.

Ah, cold pale moon, thou cruel pale moon,
  That starest with never a frown
On all the grim and the ghastly things
  That are wrought in thorpe and town:

And yet, cold pale moon, thou cruel pale moon,
  That night hadst never the grace
To lighten two dying Christian men
  To see one another's face.

They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
  They wrestled sore and still,
The fiend who blinds the eyes of men
  That night he had his will.

Like stags full spent, among the bent
  They dropped a while to rest;
When the young man drove his saying knife
  Deep in the old man's breast.

The old man drove his gunstock down
  Upon the young man's head;
And side by side, by the water brown,
  Those yeomen twain lay dead.

They dug three graves in Lyndhurst yard;
  They dug them side by side;
Two yeomen lie there, and a maiden fair
  A widow and never a bride.

In the New Forest, 1847.

THE RED KING

THE King was drinking in Malwood Hall,
There came in a monk before them all:
He thrust by squire, he thrust by knight,
Stood over against the dais aright;
And, "The word of the Lord, thou cruel Red King,
The word of the Lord to thee I bring.
A grimly sweven I dreamt yestreen;
I saw thee lie under the hollins green,
And through thine heart an arrow keen;
And out of thy body a smoke did rise,
Which smirched the sunshine out of the skies:
So if thou God's anointed be
I rede thee unto thy soul thou see.
For mitre and pall thou hast y-sold,
False knight to Christ, for gain and gold;
And for this thy forest were digged down all,
Steading and hamlet and churches tall;
And Christés poor were ousten forth,
To beg their bread from south to north.
So tarry at home, and fast and pray,
Lest fiends hunt thee in the judgment-day."

The monk he vanished where he stood;
King William sterte up wroth and wood;
Quod he, "Fools' wits will jump together;
The Hampshire ale and the thunder weather

Have turned the brains for us both, I think;
And monks are curst when they fall to drink.
A lothly sweven I dreamt last night,
How there hoved anigh me a griesly knight,
Did smite me down to the pit of hell;
I shrieked and woke, so fast I fell.
There 's Tyrrel as sour as I, perdie,
So he of you all shall hunt with me;
A grimly brace for a hart to see."

The Red King down from Malwood came;
His heart with wine was all a-flame,
His eyne were shotten, red as blood,
He rated and swore, wherever he rode.
They roused a hart, that grimly brace,
A hart of ten, a hart of grease,
Fled over against the kingés place.
The sun it blinded the kingés ee,
A fathom behind his hocks shot he:
"Shoot thou," quod he, "in the fiendés name,
To lose such a quarry were seven years' shame."
And he hove up his hand to mark the game.
Tyrrel he shot full light, God wot;
For whether the saints they swerved the shot,
Or whether by treason, men knowen not,
But under the arm, in a secret part,
The iron fled through the kingés heart.
The turf it squelched where the Red King fell;
And the fiends they carried his soul to hell,
Quod "His master's name it hath sped him well."

Tyrrel he smited full grim that day,
Quod "Shooting of kings is no bairns' play;"
And he smote in the spurs, and fled fast away.
As he pricked along by Fritham plain,

The green tufts flew behind like rain;
The waters were out, and over the sward:
He swam his horse like a stalwart lord:
Men clepen that water Tyrrel's ford.
By Rhinefield and by Osmondsleigh,
Through glade and furze brake fast drove he,
Until he heard the roaring sea;
Quod he, "Those gay waves they call me."
By Mary's grace a seely boat
On Christchurch bar did lie afloat;
He gave the shipmen mark and groat,
To ferry him over to Normandie,
And there he fell to sanctuarie;
God send his soul all bliss to see.

And fend our princes every one,
From foul mishap and trahison;
But kings that harrow Christian men,
Shall England never bide again.

In the New Forest, 1847.

THE OUTLAW

Oh, I wadna be a yeoman, mither, to follow my father's trade,
To bow my back in miry banks, at pleugh and hoe and spade.
Stinting wife, and bairns, and kye, to fat some courtier lord, —
Let them die o' rent wha like, mither, and I 'll die by sword.

Nor I wadna be a clerk, mither, to bide aye ben,
Scrabbling ower the sheets o' parchment with a weary weary pen;
Looking through the lang stane windows at a narrow strip o' sky,
Like a laverock in a withy cage, until I pine away and die.

Nor I wadna be a merchant, mither, in his lang furred gown,
Trailing strings o' footsore horses through the noisy dusty town;
Louting low to knights and ladies, fumbling o'er his wares,
Telling lies, and scraping siller, heaping cares on cares.

Nor I wadna be a soldier, mither, to dice wi' ruffian bands,
Pining weary months in castles, looking over wasted lands.
Smoking byres, and shrieking women, and the grewsome sights o' war —
There 's blood on my hand eneugh, mither; it 's ill to make it mair.

If I had married a wife, mither, I might ha' been douce and still,
And sat at hame by the ingle side to crack and laugh my fill;
Sat at hame wi' the woman I looed, and wi' bairnies at my knee:
But death is bauld, and age is cauld, and luve 's no for me.

For when first I stirred in your side, mither, ye ken full well
How you lay all night up among the deer out on the open fell;
And so it was that I won the heart to wander far and near,
Caring neither for land nor lassie, but the bonnie dun deer.

Yet I am not a losel and idle, mither, nor a thief that steals;
I do but hunt God's cattle, upon God's ain hills;
For no man buys and sells the deer, and the bonnie fells are free
To a belted knight with hawk on hand, and a gangrel loon like me.

So I 'm aff and away to the muirs, mither, to hunt the deer,
Ranging far frae frowning faces, and the douce folk here;
Crawling up through burn and bracken, louping down the screes,
Looking out frae craig and headland, drinking up the simmer breeze.

Oh, the wafts o' heather honey, and the music o' the brae,
As I watch the great harts feeding, nearer, nearer a' the day.
Oh, to hark the eagle screaming, sweeping, ringing round the sky —
That's a bonnier life than stumbling ower the muck to colt and kye.

And when I 'm taen and hangit, mither, a brittling o' my deer,
Ye 'll no leave your bairn to the corbie craws, to dangle in the air;
But ye 'll send up my twa douce brethren, and ye 'll steal me frae the tree,
And bury me up on the brown brown muirs, where I aye looed to be.

Ye 'll bury me 'twixt the brae and the burn, in a glen far away,
Where I may hear the heathcock craw, and the great harts bray;
And gin my ghaist can walk, mither, I 'll go glowering at the sky,
The livelong night on the black hill sides where the dun deer lie.

In the New Forest, 1847.

SING HEIGH-HO!

THERE sits a bird on every tree;
Sing heigh-ho!
There sits a bird on every tree,
And courts his love as I do thee;
Sing heigh-ho, and heigh-ho!
Young maids must marry.

There grows a flower on every bough;
Sing heigh-ho!
There grows a flower on every bough,
Its petals kiss—I 'll show you how:
Sing heigh-ho, and heigh-ho!
Young maids must marry.

From sea to stream the salmon roam;
Sing heigh-ho!
From sea to stream the salmon roam;
Each finds a mate, and leads her home;
Sing heigh-ho, and heigh-ho!
Young maids must marry.

The sun 's a bridegroom, earth a bride;
Sing heigh-ho!
They court from morn till eventide:
The earth shall pass, but love abide.
Sing heigh-ho, and heigh-ho!
Young maids must marry.

EVERSLEY, 1847.

THE BAD SQUIRE

THE merry brown hares came leaping
  Over the crest of the hill,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
  Under the moonlight still.

Leaping late and early,
  Till under their bite and their tread
The swedes and the wheat and the barley
  Lay cankered and trampled and dead.

A poacher's widow sat sighing
  On the side of the white chalk bank,
Where under the gloomy fir-woods
  One spot in the ley throve rank.

She watched a long tuft of clover,
  Where rabbit or hare never ran;
For its black sour haulm covered over
  The blood of a murdered man.

She thought of the dark plantation,
  And the hares, and her husband's blood,
And the voice of her indignation
  Rose up to the throne of God.

"I am long past wailing and whining —
  I have wept too much in my life:
I've had twenty years of pining
  As an English laborer's wife,

"A laborer in Christian England,
  Where they cant of a Saviour's name,
And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's
  For a few more brace of game.

"There 's blood on your new foreign shrubs, squire,
  There 's blood on your pointer's feet;
There 's blood on the game you sell, squire,
  And there 's blood on the game you eat.

"You have sold the laboring-man, squire,
  Body and soul to shame,
To pay for your seat in the House, squire,
  And to pay for the feed of your game.

"You made him a poacher yourself, squire,
  When you 'd give neither work nor meat,
And your barley-fed hares robbed the garden
  At our starving children's feet;

"When, packed in one reeking chamber,
  Man, maid, mother, and little ones lay;
While the rain pattered in on the rotting bride-bed,
  And the walls let in the day.

"When we lay in the burning fever
  On the mud of the cold clay floor,
Till you parted us all for three months, squire,
  At the dreary workhouse door.

"We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders?
  What self-respect could we keep,
Worse housed than your hacks and your pointers,
  Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep?

"Our daughters with base-born babies
  Have wandered away in their shame,
If your misses had slept, squire, where they did,
  Your misses might do the same.

"Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking
  With handfuls of coals and rice,
Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting
  A little below cost price?

"You may tire of the jail and the workhouse,
  And take to allotments and schools,
But you 've run up a debt that will never
  Be paid us by penny-club rules.

"In the season of shame and sadness,
  In the dark and dreary day,
When scrofula, gout, and madness
  Are eating your race away;

"When to kennels and liveried varlets
  You have cast your daughter's bread,
And, worn out with liquor and harlots,
  Your heir at your feet lies dead;

"When your youngest, the mealy-mouthed rector,
  Lets your soul rot asleep to the grave,
You will find in your God the protector
  Of the freeman you fancied your slave."

She looked at the tuft of clover,
  And wept till her heart grew light;
And at last, when her passion was over,
  Went wandering into the night.

But the merry brown hares came leaping
  Over the uplands still,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping
  On the side of the white chalk hill.

EVERSLEY, 1848.
From "*Yeast*."

SCOTCH SONG

OH, forth she went like a braw, braw bride
  To meet her winsome groom,
When she was aware of twa bonny birds
  Sat biggin' in the broom.

The tane it built with the green, green moss,
  But and the bents sae fine,
And the tither wi' a lock o' lady's hair
  Linked up wi' siller twine.

"O whaur gat ye the green, green moss,
  O whaur the bents sae fine?
And whaur gat ye the bonny broun hair
  That ance was tress o' mine?"

"We gat the moss fra' the elditch aile,
  The bents fra' the whinny muir,
And a fause knight threw us the bonny broun hair,
  To please his braw new fere."

"Gae pull, gae pull the simmer leaves,
  And strew them saft o'er me;
My token's tint, my love is fause,
  I'll lay me doon and dee."

1848.

A MARCH

DREARY East winds howling o'er us;
Clay-lands knee-deep spread before us;
Mire and ice and snow and sleet;
Aching backs and frozen feet;
Knees which reel as marches quicken,
Ranks which thin as corpses thicken;
While with carrion birds we eat,
Calling puddle-water sweet,
As we pledge the health of our general, who fares
as rough as we:
What can daunt us, what can turn us, led to death
by such as he?

EVERSLEY, 1848.

THE NIGHT BIRD

A MYTH

A FLOATING, a floating
Across the sleeping sea,
All night I heard a singing bird
Upon the topmost tree.

"Oh came you off the isles of Greece,
Or off the banks of Seine;
Or off some tree in forests free,
Which fringe the western main?"

"I came not off the old world
Nor yet from off the new—
But I am one of the birds of God
Which sing the whole night through."

"Oh sing, and wake the dawning—
Oh whistle for the wind;
The night is long, the current strong,
My boat it lags behind."

"The current sweeps the old world,
The current sweeps the new;
The wind will blow, the dawn will glow
Ere thou hast sailed them through."

EVERSLEY, 1848.

THE DEAD CHURCH

WILD wild wind, wilt thou never cease thy sighing?
  Dark dark night, wilt thou never wear away?
Cold cold church, in thy death sleep lying,
  The Lent is past, thy Passion here, but not thine Easter-day.

Peace, faint heart, though the night be dark and sighing;
  Rest, fair corpse, where thy Lord himself hath lain.
Weep, dear Lord, above thy bride low lying;
  Thy tears shall wake her frozen limbs to life and health again.

EVERSLEY, 1848.

A PARABLE FROM LIEBIG

THE church bells were ringing, the devil sat singing
On the stump of a rotting old tree;
"Oh faith it grows cold, and the creeds they grow old,
And the world is nigh ready for me."

The bells went on ringing, a spirit came singing,
And smiled as he crumbled the tree;
"Yon wood does but perish new seedlings to cherish,
And the world is too live yet for thee."

EVERSLEY, 1848.

OLD AND NEW

A PARABLE

SEE how the autumn leaves float by decaying,
Down the wild swirls of the rain-swollen stream.
So fleet the works of men, back to their earth again;
Ancient and holy things fade like a dream.

Nay! see the spring-blossoms steal forth a-maying,
Clothing with tender hues orchard and glen;
So, though old forms pass by, ne'er shall their spirit die,
Look! England's bare boughs show green leaf again.

EVERSLEY, 1848.

THE WATCHMAN

"WATCHMAN, what of the night?"
  "The stars are out in the sky,
And the merry round moon will be rising soon,
  For us to go sailing by."

"Watchman, what of the night?"
  "The tide flows in from the sea;
There 's water to float a little cockboat
  Will carry such fishers as we."

"Watchman, what of the night?"
  "The night is a fruitful time;
When to many a pair are born children fair,
  To be christened at morning chime."

1848.

THE WORLD'S AGE

WHO will say the world is dying?
  Who will say our prime is past?
Sparks from Heaven, within us lying,
  Flash, and will flash till the last.
Fools! who fancy Christ mistaken;
  Man a tool to buy and sell;
Earth a failure, God-forsaken,
  Anteroom of Hell.

Still the race of Hero-spirits
  Pass the lamp from hand to hand;
Age from age the Words inherits—
  "Wife, and Child, and Fatherland,"
Still the youthful hunter gathers
  Fiery joy from wold and wood;
He will dare as dared his fathers
  Give him cause as good.

While a slave bewails his fetters;
  While an orphan pleads in vain;
While an infant lisps his letters,
  Heir of all the age's gain;
While a lip grows ripe for kissing;
  While a moan from man is wrung;
Know, by every want and blessing,
  That the world is young.

1848.

MY HUNTING SONG

FORWARD! Hark forward 's the cry!
One more fence and we're out on the open,
So to us at once, if you want to live near us!
Hark to them, ride to them, beauties! as on they go,
Leaping and sweeping away in the vale below!
Cowards and bunglers, whose heart or whose eye is slow,
Find themselves staring alone.

So the great cause flashes by;
Nearer and clearer its purposes open,
While louder and prouder the world-echoes cheer us:
Gentlemen sportsmen, you ought to live up to us,
Lead us, and lift us, and hallo our game to us—
We cannot call the hounds off, and no shame to us—
Don't be left staring alone!

EVERSLEY, 1848.

ALTON LOCKE'S SONG

WEEP, weep, weep and weep,
  For pauper, dolt, and slave!
Hark! from wasted moor and fen
Feverous alley, stifling den,
Swells the wail of Saxon men—
  Work! or the grave!

Down, down, down and down
  With idler, knave, and tyrant!
Why for sluggards cark and moil?
He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil!
  God's word 's our warrant!

Up, up, up and up!
  Face your game and play it!
The night is past, behold the sun!
The idols fall, the lie is done!
The Judge is set, the doom begun!
  Who shall stay it?

ON TORRIDGE, *May*, 1848.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

THE Day of the Lord is at hand, at hand:
  Its storms roll up the sky:
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold;
  All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
    And the Day of the Lord at hand.

Gather you, gather you, angels of God —
  Freedom, and Mercy, and Truth;
Come! for the Earth is grown coward and old,
  Come down, and renew us her youth.
Wisdom, Self-Sacrifice, Daring, and Love,
Haste to the battle-field, stoop from above,
    To the Day of the Lord at hand.

Gather you, gather you, hounds of hell —
  Famine, and Plague, and War;
Idleness, Bigotry, Cant, and Misrule,
  Gather, and fall in the snare!
Hireling and Mammonite, Bigot and Knave,
Crawl to the battle-field, sneak to your grave,
    In the Day of the Lord at hand.

Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
  While the Lord of all ages is here?

True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God,
  And those who can suffer, can dare.
Each old age of gold was an iron age too,
And the meekest of saints may find stern work to do,
    In the Day of the Lord at hand.

On the Torridge, Devonshire,
September 10, 1848.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

It chanced upon the merry merry Christmas eve,
I went sighing past the church across the moorland dreary —
"Oh! never sin and want and woe this earth will leave,
And the bells but mock the wailing round, they sing so cheery.
How long, O Lord! how long before Thou come again?
Still in cellar, and in garret, and on moorland dreary
The orphans moan, and widows weep, and poor men toil in vain,
Till earth is sick of hope deferred, though Christmas bells be cheery."

Then arose a joyous clamor from the wild-fowl on the mere,
Beneath the stars, across the snow, like clear bells ringing,
And a voice within cried — "Listen! — Christmas carols even here!
Though thou be dumb, yet o'er their work the stars and snows are singing.

Blind! I live, I love, I reign; and all the nations through
With the thunder of my judgments even now are ringing.
Do thou fulfil thy work but as yon wild-fowl do,
Thou wilt heed no less the wailing, yet hear through it angels singing."

EVERSLEY, 1848.

OLD SAWS NEW SET[1]

A GREEK FABLE TO AN ENGLISH MORAL

I MET John Clod the other day quite out of sorts and pensive,
And grumbling at the government as idle and expensive,
"With taxing food and clothes and light, they've almost broke our backs;
And when shall we poor chaps get back our money's worth, I ax?
I seed upon the paper what a lot we have to pay:
They promises us all reform, but they cart no dirt away.
This government does nothing, sir, I've most a mind to riot."
"So had the frogs, friend John," quoth I, "but they got little by it."
"How's that, then?" "Why, these frogs had lived for many a hundred year,
Like jolly old republicans, without distress or fear;
When having grown more civilized, the sapient croakers found,
That all they wanted was a king, just like the nations round.

[1] Published for the first time in any collected edition.

So for a king they prayed — Jove heard — and kindly tossed a log
Down out of heaven among them all, and flattened many a frog.
The great unsquashed croaked loyal awe, and swore on bended knees,
To carry out with fire and sword whate'er their king might please:
But his majesty pleased nothing — no! he would n't even swear.
To find their dear-bought whistle dumb, was more than frogs could bear.
'A king!' they squalled again. Jove laughed, 'They can't let well alone;
Why, lazy rulers leave at least each man to mind his own;
Well, then, here's something practical, — this government shall work.'
And Iris post from Belgium fetched a patriarchal stork.

. . . . . .

The stork surveyed his subjects with a true Malthusian air —
'Ah! over population! There's the mischief, I declare!
The bog will get quite pauperized!' he stretched two yard-long bills,
And sucked down luckless frog on frog, and as he gulped his pills,
'Your individual sufferings, my brothers, may be great,
But then, like starving artisans, your suffering feeds the State.'

In vain they shrieked to Jove; 'It's now too late, my friends, to talk;
You've had your choice — you cut King Log, you cannot cut King Stork.'"

Moral

New brooms sweep clean — but then new boots are apt to prove too tight;
Each party tries its nostrums — if they could but hit the right!
Things might be better, babies know — but then things might be worse.
Reforms are God's own blessings — Revolutions oft His curse.

ENGLAND FOR THE ENGLISH

Our demagogues, as wise old Aristophanes may show,
Are playing just the game they played two thousand years ago.
"They work," says he, "like seamen when they go to fish for eels;
They stir the mud, and foul the ponds, and so they fill their creels.
For fools, like eels, pop up their heads, whene'er they scent a riot;
And orators in shoals would starve, if once the State grew quiet."

Moral

Let workmen plead the workmen's cause, and trust no flatterer's cant,
Hold fast by English fortitude — you 'll ne'er need Irish rant.

A LAMENT

THE merry merry lark was up and singing,
  And the hare was out and feeding on the lea;
And the merry merry bells below were ringing,
  When my child's laugh rang through me.

Now the hare is snared and dead beside the snow-
    yard,
  And the lark beside the dreary winter sea;
And the baby in his cradle in the churchyard
  Sleeps sound till the bell brings me.

EVERSLEY, 1849.

THE STARLINGS

EARLY in spring time, on raw and windy mornings,
Beneath the freezing house-eaves I heard the starlings sing—
"Ah dreary March month, is this then a time for building wearily?
Sad, sad, to think that the year is but begun."

Late in the autumn, on still and cloudless evenings,
Among the golden reed-beds I heard the starlings sing—
"Ah that sweet March month, when we and our mates were courting merrily;
Sad, sad, to think that the year is all but done."

EVERSLEY, 1849.

THE SANDS OF DEE

"O MARY, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair —
A tress of golden hair,
A drownèd maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee.

EVERSLEY, 1849.

THE TIDE ROCK

How sleeps yon rock, whose half-day's bath is done.
With broad bright side beneath the broad bright sun,
Like sea-nymph tired, on cushioned mosses sleeping.
Yet, nearer drawn, beneath her purple tresses
From drooping brows we find her slowly weeping.
So many a wife for cruel man's caresses
Must inly pine and pine, yet outward bear
A gallant front to this world's gaudy glare.

Ilfracombe, 1849.

ELEGIACS

WEARILY stretches the sand to the surge, and the surge to the cloudland;
Wearily onward I ride, watching the water alone.
Not as of old, like Homeric Achilles, *κυδεϊ γαιων*,
Joyous knight-errant of God, thirsting for labor and strife;
No more on magical steed borne free through the regions of ether,
But, like the hack which I ride, selling my sinew for gold.
Fruit-bearing autumn is gone; let the sad quiet winter hang o'er me —
What were the spring to a soul laden with sorrow and shame?
Blossoms would fret me with beauty; my heart has no time to bepraise them;
Gray rock, bough, surge, cloud, waken no yearning within.
Sing not, thou sky-lark above! even angels pass hushed by the weeper.
Scream on, ye sea-fowl! my heart echoes your desolate cry.
Sweep the dry sand on, thou wild wind, to drift o'er the shell and the sea-weed;
Sea-weed and shell, like my dreams, swept down the pitiless tide.

Just is the wave which uptore us; 't is Nature's
own law which condemns us;
Woe to the weak who, in pride, build on the faith
of the sand!
Joy to the oak of the mountain: he trusts to the
might of the rock-clefts;
Deeply he mines, and in peace feeds on the wealth
of the stone.

. . . . . .

MORTE SANDS, DEVONSHIRE,
February, 1849.

DARTSIDE

I CANNOT tell what you say, green leaves,
  I cannot tell what you say:
But I know that there is a spirit in you,
  And a word in you this day.

I cannot tell what you say, rosy rocks,
  I cannot tell what you say:
But I know that there is a spirit in you,
  And a word in you this day.

I cannot tell what you say, brown streams,
  I cannot tell what you say:
But I know that in you too a spirit doth live,
  And a word doth speak this day.

"Oh green is the color of faith and truth,
And rose the color of love and youth,
    And brown of the fruitful clay.
  Sweet Earth is faithful, and fruitful, and young,
  And her bridal day shall come ere long,
And you shall know what the rocks and the streams
    And the whispering woodlands say."

DREW'S TEIGNTON, DARTMOOR,
July 31, 1849.

SONNET

Oh, thou hadst been a wife for Shakespeare's self!
No head, save some world-genius, ought to rest
Above the treasures of that perfect breast,
Or nightly draw fresh light from those keen stars
Through which thy soul awes ours: yet thou art bound —
Oh waste of nature! — to a craven hound;
To shameless lust, and childish greed of pelf;
Athené to a Satyr: was that link
Forged by The Father's hand? Man's reason bars
The bans which God allowed. — Ay, so we think:
Forgetting, thou hadst weaker been, full blest,
Than thus made strong by suffering; and more great
In martyrdom, than throned as Cæsar's mate.

Eversley, 1849.

THE THREE FISHERS

THREE fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there 's little to earn and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands

For those who will never come home to the town;
For men mus' work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it 's over, the sooner to sleep;
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

EVERSLEY, *June* 25, 1851.

MARGARET TO DOLCINO

Ask if I love thee? Oh, smiles cannot tell
Plainer what tears are now showing too well.
Had I not loved thee, my sky had been clear:
Had I not loved thee, I had not been here,
Weeping by thee.

Ask if I love thee? How else could I borrow
Pride from man's slander, and strength from my sorrow?
Laugh when they sneer at the fanatic's bride,
Knowing no bliss, save to toil and abide
Weeping by thee.

Andernach on the Rhine,
August, 1851.

DOLCINO TO MARGARET

THE world goes up and the world goes down,
  And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
  Can never come over again,
    Sweet wife:
  No, never come over again.

For woman is warm though man be cold,
  And the night will hallow the day;
Till the heart which at even was weary and old
  Can rise in the morning gay,
    Sweet wife;
  To its work in the morning gay.

ANDERNACH, 1851.

THE UGLY PRINCESS

My parents bow, and lead them forth,
  For all the crowd to see —
Ah well! the people might not care
  To cheer a dwarf like me.

They little know how I could love,
  How I could plan and toil,
To swell those drudges' scanty gains,
  Their mites of rye and oil.

They little know what dreams have been
  My playmates, night and day;
Of equal kindness, helpful care,
  A mother's perfect sway.

Now earth to earth in convent walls,
  To earth in churchyard sod:
I was not good enough for man,
  And so am given to God.

Bertrich in the Eifel, 1851.

SONNET

THE baby sings not on its mother's breast;
Nor nightingales who nestle side by side;
Nor I by thine: but let us only part,
Then lips which should but kiss, and so be still,
As having uttered all, must speak again —
Oh stunted thoughts! Oh chill and fettered rhyme!
Yet my great bliss, though still entirely blest,
Losing its proper home, can find no rest:
So, like a child who whiles away the time
With dance and carol till the eventide,
Watching its mother homeward through the glen;
Or nightingale, who, sitting far apart,
Tells to his listening mate within the nest
The wonder of his star-entrancèd heart
Till all the wakened woodlands laugh and thrill —
Forth all my being bubbles into song;
And rings aloft, not smooth, yet clear and strong.

BERTRICH, 1851.

THE SWAN-NECK

EVIL sped the battle play
On the Pope Calixtus' day;
Mighty war-smiths, thanes and lords,
In Senlac slept the sleep of swords.
Harold Earl, shot over shield,
Lay along the autumn weald;
Slaughter such was never none
Since the Ethelings England won.
  Thither Lady Githa came,
Weeping sore for grief and shame;
How may she her first-born tell?
Frenchmen stript him where he fell,
Gashed and marred his comely face;
Who can know him in his place?
  Up and spake two brethren wise,
"Youngest hearts have keenest eyes;
Bird which leaves its mother's nest,
Moults its pinions, moults its crest.
Let us call the Swan-neck here,
She that was his leman dear;
She shall know him in this stound;
Foot of wolf, and scent of hound,
Eye of hawk, and wing of dove,
Carry woman to her love."
  Up and spake the Swan-neck high,
"Go! to all your thanes let cry

How I loved him best of all,
I whom men his leman call;
Better knew his body fair
Than the mother which him bare.
When ye lived in wealth and glee
Then ye scorned to look on me;
God hath brought the proud ones low
After me afoot to go."
  Rousing erne and sallow glede,
Rousing gray wolf off his feed,
Over franklin, earl, and thane,
Heaps of mother-naked slain,
Round the red field tracing slow,
Stooped that Swan-neck white as snow;
Never blushed nor turned away,
Till she found him where he lay;
Clipt him in her armés fair,
Wrapt him in her yellow hair,
Bore him from the battle-stead,
Saw him laid in pall of lead,
Took her to a minster high,
For Earl Harold's soul to cry.

  Thus fell Harold, bracelet-giver;
Jesu rest his soul for ever;
Angles all from thrall deliver;
                Miserere Domine.

EVERSLEY, 1851.

A THOUGHT FROM THE RHINE

I HEARD an Eagle crying all alone
Above the vineyards through the summer night,
Among the skeletons of robber towers:
Because the ancient eyrie of his race
Was trenched and walled by busy-handed men;
And all his forest-chace and woodland wild,
Wherefrom he fed his young with hare and roe,
Were trim with grapes which swelled from hour to
hour,
And tossed their golden tendrils to the sun
For joy at their own riches: — So, I thought,
The great devourers of the earth shall sit,
Idle and impotent, they know not why,
Down-staring from their barren height of state
On nations grown too wise to slay and slave,
The puppets of the few; while peaceful lore
And fellow-help make glad the heart of earth,
With wonders which they fear and hate, as he,
The Eagle, hates the vineyard slopes below.

ON THE RHINE, 1852.

THE LONGBEARDS' SAGA. A. D. 400

OVER the camp-fires
Drank I with heroes,
Under the Donau bank,
Warm in the snow trench:
Sagamen heard I there,
Men of the Longbeards,
Cunning and ancient,
Honey-sweet-voiced.
Scaring the wolf cub,
Scaring the horn-owl,
Shaking the snow-wreaths
Down from the pine-boughs,
Up to the star roof
Rang out their song.
Singing how Winil men,
Over the ice-floes
Sledging from Scanland
Came unto Scoring;
Singing of Gambara,
Freya's belovèd,
Mother of Ayo,
Mother of Ibor.
Singing of Wendel men
Ambri and Assi;
How to the Winilfolk
Went they with war-words,—
"Few are ye, strangers,
And many are we:
Pay us now toll and fee,

Cloth-yarn, and rings, and beeves:
Else at the raven's meal
Bide the sharp bill's doom."
Clutching the dwarf's work then,
Clutching the bullock's shell,
Girding gray iron on,
Forth fared the Winils all,
Fared the Alruna's sons,
Ayo and Ibor.
Mad at heart stalked they:
Loud wept the women all,
Loud the Alruna wife;
Sore was their need.
Out of the morning land,
Over the snow-drifts,
Beautiful Freya came,
Tripping to Scoring.
White were the moorlands,
And frozen before her:
Green were the moorlands,
And blooming behind her.
Out of her gold locks
Shaking the spring flowers,
Out of her garments
Shaking the south wind,
Around in the birches
Awaking the throstles,
And making chaste housewives all
Long for their heroes home,
Loving and love-giving,
Came she to Scoring.
Came unto Gambara,
Wisest of Valas,—
"Vala, why weepest thou?
Far in the wide-blue,

High up in the Elfin-home,
Heard I thy weeping."
"Stop not my weeping,
Till one can fight seven.
Sons have I, heroes tall,
First in the sword-play;
This day at the Wendels' hands
Eagles must tear them.
Their mothers, thrall-weary,
Must grind for the Wendels."
Wept the Alruna wife;
Kissed her fair Freya: —
"Far off in the morning land,
High in Valhalla,
A window stands open;
Its sill is the snow-peaks,
Its posts are the water-spouts,
Storm-rack its lintel;
Gold cloud-flakes above
Are piled for the roofing,
Far up to the Elfin-home,
High in the wide-blue.
Smiles out each morning thence
Odin Allfather;
From under the cloud-eaves
Smiles out on the heroes,
Smiles on chaste housewives all,
Smiles on the brood-mares,
Smiles on the smiths' work:
And theirs is the sword-luck,
With them is the glory, —
So Odin hath sworn it, —
Who first in the morning
Shall meet him and greet him."
Still the Alruna wept: —

"Who then shall greet him?
Women alone are here:
Far on the moorlands
Behind the war-lindens,
In vain for the bill's doom
Watch Winil heroes all,
One against seven."
Sweetly the Queen laughed: —
"Hear thou my counsel now;
Take to thee cunning,
Belovèd of Freya.
Take thou thy women-folk,
Maidens and wives:
Over your ankles
Lace on the white war-hose;
Over your bosoms
Link up the hard mail-nets;
Over your lips
Plait long tresses with cunning; —
So war-beasts full-bearded
King Odin shall deem you,
When off the gray sea-beach
At sunrise ye greet him."

Night's son was driving
His golden-haired horses up;
Over the eastern firths
High flashed their manes.
Smiled from the cloud-eaves out
Allfather Odin,
Waiting the battle-sport:
Freya stood by him.
"Who are these heroes tall, —
Lusty-limbed Longbeards?
Over the swans' bath

Why cry they to me?
Bones should be crashing fast,
Wolves should be full-fed,
Where such, mad-hearted,
Swing hands in the sword-play."

Sweetly laughed Freya: —
" A name thou hast given them,
Shames neither thee nor them,
Well can they wear it.
Give them the victory,
First have they greeted thee;
Give them the victory.
Yokefellow mine!
Maidens and wives are these,—
Wives of the Winils;
Few are their heroes
And far on the war-road,
So over the swans' bath
They cry unto thee."

Royally laughed he then;
Dear was that craft to him,
Odin Allfather,
Shaking the clouds.
" Cunning are women all,
Bold and importunate!
Longbeards their name shall be,
Ravens shall thank them:
Where women are heroes,
What must the men be?
Theirs is the victory;
No need of me!"

EVERSLEY, 1852.
From "*Hypatia.*"

SAINT MAURA. A. D. 304

THANK God! Those gazers' eyes are gone at last!
The guards are crouching underneath the rock;
The lights are fading in the town below,
Around the cottage which this morn was ours.
Kind sun, to set, and leave us here alone;
Alone upon our crosses with our God;
While all the angels watch us from the stars.
Kind moon, to shine so clear and full on him,
And bathe his limbs in glory, for a sign
Of what awaits him! Oh look on him, Lord!
Look, and remember how he saved Thy lamb!
  Oh listen to me, teacher, husband, love,
Never till now loved utterly! Oh say,
Say you forgive me? No — you must not speak:
You said it to me hours ago — long hours!
Now you must rest, and when to-morrow comes
Speak to the people, call them home to God,
A deacon on the Cross, as in the Church;
And plead from off the tree with outspread arms,
To show them that the Son of God endured
For them — and me. Hush! I alone will speak,
And while away the hours till dawn for you.
I know you have forgiven me; as I lay
Beneath your feet, while they were binding me,
I knew I was forgiven then! When I cried
"Here am I, husband! The lost lamb returned,
All re-baptized in blood!" and you said, "Come!

Come to thy bride-bed, martyr, wife once more!"
From that same moment all my pain was gone;
And ever since those sightless eyes have smiled
Love — love! Alas, those eyes! They made me fall.
I could not bear to see them bleeding, dark,
Never, no never to look into mine;
Never to watch me round the little room
Singing about my work, or flash on me
Looks bright with counsel. — Then they drove me mad
With talk of nameless tortures waiting you —
And I could save you! You would hear your love —
They knew you loved me, cruel men! And then —
Then came a dream; to say one little word,
One easy wicked word, we both might say,
And no one hear us, but the lictors round;
One tiny sprinkle of the incense grains,
And both, both free! And life had just begun —
Only three months — short months — your wedded wife
Only three months within the cottage there —
Hoping I bore your child. . . .
Ah! husband! Saviour! God! think gently of me!
I am forgiven! . . .
And then another dream;
A flash — so quick, I could not bear the blaze;
I could not see the smoke among the light —
To wander out through unknown lands, and lead
You by the hand through hamlet, port, and town,
On, on, until we died; and stand each day
To glory in you, as you preached and prayed
From rock and bourne-stone, with that voice, those words,

Mingled with fire and honey — you would wake,
Bend, save whole nations! would not that atone
For one short word? — ay, make it right, to save
You, you, to fight the battles of the Lord?
And so — and so — alas! you knew the rest!
You answered me. . . .
Ah cruel words! No! Blessed, godlike words!
You had done nobly had you struck me dead,
Instead of striking me to life! — the temptress! . . .
"Traitress! apostate! dead to God and me!" ——
"The smell of death upon me?" — so it was!
True! true! well spoken, hero! Oh they snapped,
Those words, my madness, like the angel's voice
Thrilling the graves to birth-pangs. All was clear.
There was but one right thing in the world to do;
And I must do it. . . . Lord, have mercy! Christ!
Help through my womanhood: or I shall fail
Yet, as I failed before! . . . I could not speak —
I could not speak for shame and misery,
And terror of my sin, and of the things
I knew were coming: but in heaven, in heaven!
There we should meet, perhaps — and by that time
I might be worthy of you once again —
Of you, and of my God. . . . So I went out.

. . . . . .

Will you hear more, and so forget the pain?
And yet I dread to tell you what comes next;
Your love will feel it all again for me.
No! it is over; and the woe that 's dead
Rises next hour a glorious angel. Love!
Say, shall I tell you? Ah! your lips are dry!
To-morrow, when they come, we must entreat,
And they will give you water. One to-day,
A soldier, gave me water in a sponge
Upon a reed, and said, "Too fair! too young!

She might have been a gallant soldier's wife!"
And then I cried, "I am a soldier's wife!
A hero's!" And he smiled, but let me drink.
God bless him for it!

So they led me back:
And as I went, a voice was in my ears
Which rang through all the sunlight, and the breath
And blaze of all the garden slopes below,
And through the harvest-voices, and the moan
Of cedar-forests on the cliffs above,
And round the shining rivers, and the peaks
Which hung beyond the cloud-bed of the west,
And round the ancient stones about my feet.
Out of all heaven and earth it rang, and cried,
"My hand hath made all these. Am I too weak
To give thee strength to say so?" Then my soul
Spread like a clear blue sky within my breast,
While all the people made a ring around,
And in the midst the judge spoke smilingly —
"Well! hast thou brought him to a better mind?"
"No! He has brought me to a better mind!" —
I cried, and said beside — I know not what —
Words which I learnt from thee — I trust in God
Nought fierce or rude — for was I not a girl
Three months ago beneath my mother's roof?
I thought of that. She might be there! I looked —
She was not there! I hid my face and wept.
And when I looked again, the judge's eye
Was on me, cold and steady, deep in thought —
"She knows what shame is still; so strip her."
"Ah!"
I shricked, "Not that, Sir! Any pain! So young
I am — a wife too — I am not my own,
But his — my husband's!" But they took my shawl,

And tore my tunic off, and there I stood
Before them all. . . . Husband! you love me still?
Indeed I pleaded! Oh, shine out, kind moon,
And let me see him smile! Oh! how I prayed,
While some cried "Shame!" and some, "She is too young!"
And some mocked — ugly words: God shut my ears.
And yet no earthquake came to swallow me.
While all the court around, and walls, and roofs,
And all the earth and air were full of eyes,
Eyes, eyes, which scorched my limbs like burning flame,
Until my brain seemed bursting from my brow:
And yet no earthquake came! And then I knew
This body was not yours alone, but God's —
His loan — He needed it: and after that
The worst was come, and any torture more
A change — a lightening; and I did not shriek —
Once only — once, when first I felt the whip —
It coiled so keen around my side, and sent
A fire-flash through my heart which choked me — then
I shrieked — that once. The foolish echo rang
So far and long — I prayed you might not hear.
And then a mist, which hid the ring of eyes,
Swam by me, and a murmur in my ears
Of humming bees around the limes at home;
And I was all alone with you and God.
And what they did to me I hardly know;
I felt, and did not feel. Now I look back,
It was not after all so very sharp:
So do not pity me. It made me pray;
Forget my shame in pain, and pain in you,

And you in God: and once, when I looked down,
And saw an ugly sight — so many wounds!
"What matter?" thought I. "His dear eyes are dark;
For them alone I kept these limbs so white —
A foolish pride! As God wills now. 'T is just."
But then the judge spoke out in haste: "She is mad,
Or fenced by magic arts! She feels no pain!"
He did not know I was on fire within:
Better he should not; so his sin was less.
Then he cried fiercely, "Take the slave away,
And crucify her by her husband's side!"
And at those words a film came on my face —
A sickening rush of joy — was that the end?
That my reward? I rose, and tried to go —
But all the eyes had vanished, and the judge;
And all the buildings melted into mist:
So how they brought me here I cannot tell —
Here, here, by you until the judgment-day,
And after that for ever and for ever!
Ah! If I could but reach that hand! One touch!
One finger tip, to send the thrill through me
I felt but yesterday! — No! I can wait: —
Another body! — Oh, new limbs are ready,
Free, pure, instinct with soul through every nerve,
Kept for us in the treasuries of God.
They will not mar the love they try to speak,
They will not fail my soul, as these have done!

. . . . . .

Will you hear more? Nay — you know all the rest:
Yet those poor eyes — alas! they could not see
My waking, when you hung above me there
With hands outstretched to bless the penitent —

Your penitent — even like The Lord Himself —
I gloried in you! — like The Lord Himself!
Sharing His very sufferings, to the crown
Of thorns which they had put on that dear brow
To make you like Him — show you as you were!
I told them so! I bid them look on you,
And see there what was the highest throne on earth —
The throne of suffering, where the Son of God
Endured and triumphed for them. But they laughed;
All but one soldier, gray with many scars;
And he stood silent. Then I crawled to you,
And kissed your bleeding feet, and called aloud —
You heard me! You know all! I am at peace.
Peace, peace, as still and bright as is the moon
Upon your limbs, came on me at your smile,
And kept me happy, when they dragged me back
From that last kiss, and spread me on the cross,
And bound my wrists and ankles — Do not sigh:
I prayed, and bore it: and since they raised me up
My eyes have never left your face, my own, my own,
Nor will, till death comes! . . .
Do I feel much pain?
Not much. Not maddening. None I cannot bear.
It has become like part of my own life,
Or part of God's life in me — honor — bliss!
I dreaded madness, and instead comes rest;
Rest deep and smiling, like a summer's night.
I should be easy, now, if I could move . . .
I cannot stir. Ah God! these shoots of fire
Through all my limbs! Hush, selfish girl! He hears you!

Who ever found the cross a pleasant bed?
Yes; I can bear it, love. Pain is no evil
Unless it conquers us. These little wrists, now —
You said, one blessed night, they were too slender,
Too soft and slender for a deacon's wife —
Perhaps a martyr's: — You forgot the strength
Which God can give. The cord has cut them through;
And yet my voice has never faltered yet.
Oh! do not groan, or I shall long and pray
That you may die: and you must not die yet.
Not yet — they told us we might live three days . . .
Two days for you to preach! Two days to speak
Words which may wake the dead!

. . . . . .

Hush! is he sleeping?
They say that men have slept upon the cross;
So why not he? . . . Thanks, Lord! I hear him breathe:
And he will preach Thy word to-morrow! — save
Souls, crowds, for Thee! And they will know his worth
Years hence — poor things, they know not what they do! —
And crown him martyr; and his name will ring
Through all the shores of earth, and all the stars
Whose eyes are sparkling through their tears to see
His triumph — Preacher! Martyr! — Ah — and me? —
If they must couple my poor name with his,
Let them tell all the truth — say how I loved him,

And tried to damn him by that love! Oh Lord!
Returning good for evil! and was this
The payment I deserved for such a sin?
To hang here on my cross, and look at him
Until we kneel before Thy throne in heaven!

EVERSLEY, 1852.

ON THE DEATH OF A CERTAIN JOURNAL[1]

So die, thou child of stormy dawn,
Thou winter flower, forlorn of nurse;
Chilled early by the bigot's curse,
The pedant's frown, the worldling's yawn.

Fair death, to fall in teeming June,
When every seed which drops to earth
Takes root, and wins a second birth
From steaming shower and gleaming moon.

Fall warm, fall fast, thou mellow rain;
Thou rain of God, make fat the land;
That roots which parch in burning sand
May bud to flower and fruit again.

To grace, perchance, a fairer morn
In mightier lands beyond the sea,
While honor falls to such as we
From hearts of heroes yet unborn,

Who in the light of fuller day,
Of purer science, holier laws,
Bless us, faint heralds of their cause,
Dim beacons of their glorious way.

[1] The *Christian Socialist*, started by the Council of Associates for promotion of Co-operation.

Failure? While tide-floods rise and boil
Round cape and isle, in port and cove,
Resistless, star-led from above:
What though our tiny wave recoil?

EVERSLEY, 1852.

HEXAMETERS

LINGER no more, my beloved, by abbey and cell and cathedral;
Mourn not for holy ones mourning of old them who knew not the Father,
Weeping with fast and scourge, when the bridegroom was taken from them.
Drop back awhile through the years, to the warm rich youth of the nations,
Child-like in virtue and faith, though child-like in passion and pleasure;
Child-like still, and still near to their God, while the day-spring of Eden
Lingered in rose-red rays on the peaks of Ionian Mountains.
Down to the Mothers, as Faust went, I go, to the roots of our Manhood,
Mothers of us in our cradles; of us once more in our glory,
New-born body and soul, in the great pure world which shall be,
In the renewing of all things, when man shall return to his Eden
Conquering evil, and death, and shame, and the slander of conscience —
Free in the sunshine of Godhead — and fearlessly smile on his Father.
Down to the mothers I go — yet with thee still! — be with me, thou purest!
Lead me, thy hand in my hand; and the day-spring of God go before us.

EVERSLEY, 1852.

THE OUBIT[1]

It was an hairy oubit, sae proud he crept alang;
A feckless hairy oubit, and merrily he sang —
"My Minnie bad me bide at hame until I won my wings;
I shew her soon my soul 's aboon the warks o' creeping things."

This feckless hairy oubit cam' hirpling by the linn,
A swirl o' wind cam' doun the glen, and blew that oubit in:
O when he took the water, the saumon fry they rose,
And tigg'd him a' to pieces sma', by head and tail and toes.

Tak' warning then, young poets a', by this poor oubit's shame;
Though Pegasus may nicher loud, keep Pegasus at hame;
O haud your hands frae inkhorns, though a' the Muses woo;
For critics lie, like saumon fry, to make their meals o' you.

Eversley, 1853.

[1] Found among Sandy Mackaye's papers, of a hairy oubit who would not mind his mother.

TO MISS MITFORD

AUTHORESS OF "OUR VILLAGE"

THE single eye, the daughter of the light;
Well pleased to recognize in lowliest shade
Some glimmer of its parent beam, and made
By daily draughts of brightness, inly bright.
The taste severe, yet graceful, trained aright
In classic depth and clearness, and repaid
By thanks and honor from the wise and staid —
By pleasant skill to blame, and yet delight,
And high communion with the eloquent throng
Of those who purified our speech and song —
All these are yours. The same examples lure,
You in each woodland, me on breezy moor —
With kindred aim the same sweet path along,
To knit in loving knowledge rich and poor.

EVERSLEY, 1853.

BALLAD OF EARL HALDAN'S DAUGHTER

It was Earl Haldan's daughter,
She looked across the sea;
She looked across the water;
And long and loud laughed she:
"The locks of six princesses
Must be my marriage fee,
So hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
Who comes a wooing me?"

It was Earl Haldan's daughter,
She walked along the sand;
When she was aware of a knight so fair,
Came sailing to the land.
His sails were all of velvet,
His mast of beaten gold,
And "Hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
Who saileth here so bold?"

"The locks of five princesses
I won beyond the sea;
I clipt their golden tresses,
To fringe a cloak for thee.
One handful yet is wanting,
But one of all the tale;
So hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
Furl up thy velvet sail!"

He leapt into the water,
  That rover young and bold;
He gript Earl Haldan's daughter,
  He clipt her locks of gold:
"Go weep, go weep, proud maiden,
  The tale is full to-day.
Now hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!
  Sail Westward ho! away!"

DEVONSHIRE, 1854.
From "*Westward Ho!*"

FRANK LEIGH'S SONG A.D. 1586

AH tyrant Love, Megæra's serpents bearing,
  Why thus requite my sighs with venom'd smart?
Ah ruthless dove, the vulture's talons wearing,
  Why flesh them, traitress, in this faithful heart?
Is this my meed? Must dragons' teeth alone
In Venus' lawns by lovers' hands be sown?

Nay, gentlest Cupid; 't was my pride undid me;
  Nay, guiltless dove; by mine own wound I fell.
To worship, not to wed, Celestials bid me:
  I dreamt to mate in heaven, and wake in hell;
For ever doom'd, Ixion-like, to reel
On mine own passions' ever-burning wheel.

DEVONSHIRE, 1854.
From "*Westward Ho!*"

ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND

WELCOME, wild North-easter!
  Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr;
  Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black North-easter!
  O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
  From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
  Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
  Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
  Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter
  Turns us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
  Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
  Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;
  Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
  Lonely curlew pipe.
Through the black fir-forest
  Thunder harsh and dry,

Shattering down the snow-flakes
  Off the curdled sky.
Hark! The brave North-easter!
  Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt and headland,
  Over heath and bent.
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
  Through the sleet and snow.
Who can over-ride you?
  Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
  Down the roaring blast;
You shall see a fox die
  Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest to-morrow,
  Hunting in your dreams,
While our skates are ringing
  O'er the frozen streams.
Let the luscious South-wind
  Breathe in lovers' sighs,
While the lazy gallants
  Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
  Heart alike and pen?
'T is the hard gray weather
  Breeds hard English men.
What 's the soft South-wester?
  'T is the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true-loves
  Out of all the seas:
But the black North-easter,
  Through the snowstorm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
  Seaward round the world.
Come, as came our fathers,

Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.
Come; and strong within us
Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew;
Blow, thou wind of God!

1854.

A FAREWELL

TO C. E. G.

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe in skies so dull and gray;
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you,
For every day.

I 'll tell you how to sing a clearer carol
Than lark who hails the dawn or breezy down;
To earn yourself a purer poet's laurel
Than Shakespeare's crown.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long;
And so make Life, Death, and that vast For Ever,
One grand sweet song.

February 1, 1856.

To G. A. G.

A HASTY jest I once let fall —
As jests are wont to be, untrue —
As if the sum of joy to you
Were hunt and picnic, rout and ball.

Your eyes met mine: I did not blame;
You saw it: but I touched too near
Some noble nerve; a silent tear
Spoke soft reproach, and lofty shame.

I do not wish those words unsaid.
Unspoilt by praise and pleasure, you
In that one look to woman grew,
While with a child, I thought, I played.

Next to mine own beloved so long!
I have not spent my heart in vain.
I watched the blade; I see the grain;
A woman's soul, most soft, yet strong.

EVERSLEY, 1856.

THE SOUTH WIND

A FISHERMAN'S BLESSINGS

Oh blessed drums of Aldershot!
  Oh blessed South-west train!
Oh blessed, blessed Speaker's clock,
  All prophesying rain!

Oh blessed yaffil, laughing loud!
  Oh blessed falling glass!
Oh blessed fan of cold gray cloud!
  Oh blessed smelling grass!

Oh bless'd South wind that toots his horn
  Through every hole and crack!
I'm off at eight to-morrow morn,
  To bring *such* fishes back!

EVERSLEY, *April* 1, 1856.

THE INVITATION

TO TOM HUGHES

COME away with me, Tom,
Term and talk are done;
My poor lads are reaping,
Busy every one.
Curates mind the parish,
Sweepers mind the court;
We 'll away to Snowdon
For our ten days' sport;
Fish the August evening
Till the eve is past,
Whoop like boys, at pounders
Fairly played and grassed.
When they cease to dimple,
Lunge, and swerve, and leap,
Then up over Siabod,
Choose our nest, and sleep.
Up a thousand feet, Tom,
Round the lion's head,
Find soft stones to leeward
And make up our bed.
Eat our bread and bacon,
Smoke the pipe of peace,
And, ere we be drowsy,
Give our boots a grease.
Homer's heroes did so,
Why not such as we?
What are sheets and servants?
Superfluity!

Pray for wives and children
Safe in slumber curled,
Then to chat till midnight
O'er this babbling world —
Of the workmen's college,
Of the price of grain,
Of the tree of knowledge,
Of the chance of rain;
If Sir A. goes Romeward,
If Miss B. sings true,
If the fleet comes homeward,
If the mare will do, —
Anything and everything —
Up there in the sky
Angels understand us,
And no "saints" are by.
Down, and bathe at day-dawn,
Tramp from lake to lake,
Washing brain and heart clean
Every step we take.
Leave to Robert Browning
Beggars, fleas, and vines,
Leave to mournful Ruskin
Popish Apennines,
Dirty Stones of Venice
And his Gas-lamps Seven —
We 've the stones of Snowdon
And the lamps of heaven.
Where 's the mighty credit
In admiring Alps?
Any goose sees "glory"
In their "snowy scalps."
Leave such signs and wonders
For the dullard brain,
As æsthetic brandy,

Opium and cayenne.
Give me Bramshill common
(St. John's harriers by),
Or the vale of Windsor,
England's golden eye.
Show me life and progress,
Beauty, health, and man;
Houses fair, trim gardens,
Turn where'er I can.
Or, if bored with "High Art,"
And such popish stuff,
One's poor ears need airing,
Snowdon's high enough.
While we find God's signet
Fresh on English ground,
Why go gallivanting
With the nations round?
Though we try no ventures
Desperate or strange;
Feed on common-places
In a narrow range;
Never sought for Franklin
Round the frozen Capes;
Even, with Macdougall,[1]
Bagged our brace of apes;
Never had our chance, Tom,
In that black Redan;
Can't avenge poor Brereton [2]

[1] Bishop of Labuan, in Borneo.

[2] Mr. William Brereton, a young officer who left the English Navy to follow Rajah Brooke's fortunes in Borneo. He was made ruler of the Sarebus and Sakarran tribes of Dyaks, and showed great executive ability; but died in 1854, at the early age of 23 years. His father, the Reverend Charles Brereton, was largely instrumental in establishing a Church of England mission in Borneo.

Out in Sakarran;
Tho' we earn our bread, Tom,
By the dirty pen,
What we can we will be,
Honest Englishmen.
Do the work that 's nearest,
Though it 's dull at whiles,
Helping, when we meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles;
See in every hedgerow
Marks of angels' feet,
Epics in each pebble
Underneath our feet;
Once a year, like schoolboys,
Robin-Hooding go,
Leaving fops and fogies
A thousand feet below.

EVERSLEY, *August* 1856.

GO HARK!

YON sound 's neither sheep-bell nor bark,
They 're running — they 're running, Go hark!
The sport may be lost by a moment's delay;
So whip up the puppies and scurry away.
Dash down through the cover by dingle and dell,
There 's a gate at the bottom — I know it full well;
And they 're running — they 're running,
Go hark!

They 're running — they 're running, Go hark!
One fence and we 're out of the park;
Sit down in your saddles and race at the brook,
Then smash at the bullfinch; no time for a look;
Leave cravens and skirters to dangle behind;
He 's away for the moors in the teeth of the wind,
And they 're running — they 're running,
Go hark!

They 're running — they 're running, Go hark!
Let them run on and run till it 's dark!
Well with them we are, and well with them we 'll be,
While there 's wind in our horses and daylight to see:
Then shog along homeward, chat over the fight,
And hear in our dreams the sweet music all night
Of — They 're running — they 're running,
Go hark!

EVERSLEY, 1856.

FISHING SONG

TO J. A. FROUDE AND TOM HUGHES

Oh, Mr. Froude, how wise and good,
To point us out this way to glory —
They 're no great shakes, those Snowdon Lakes,
And all their pounders myth and story.
Blow Snowdon! What 's Lake Gwynant to Killarney,
Or spluttering Welsh to tender blarney, blarney, blarney?

So Thomas Hughes, sir, if you choose,
I 'll tell you where we think of going,
To swate and far o'er cliff and scar,
Hear horns of Elfland faintly blowing;
Blow Snowdon! There 's a hundred lakes to try in,
And fresh caught salmon daily, frying, frying, frying.

Geology and botany
A hundred wonders shall diskiver,
We 'll flog and troll in strid and hole,
And skim the cream of lake and river.
Blow Snowdon! give me Ireland for my pennies,
Hurrah! for salmon, grilse, and —Dennis, Dennis, Dennis!

Eversley, 1856.

THE LAST BUCCANEER

OH England is a pleasant place for them that's rich
and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks
as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again
As the pleasant Isle of Avès, beside the Spanish
main.

There were forty craft in Avès that were both swift
and stout,
All furnished well with small arms and cannons
round about;
And a thousand men in Avès made laws so fair
and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them
loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his
hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian
folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as
hard as stone,
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve
them to the bone.

Oh the palms grew high in Avès, and fruits that shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Avès from bondage fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors, a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward-breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things must be;
So the King's ships sailed on Avès, and quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing she died;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here, to beg until I die.

And now I 'm old and going — I 'm sure I can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world 's so hard, I can't be worse off there:
If I might but be a sea-dove, I 'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Avès, to look at it once again.

EVERSLEY, 1857.

THE KNIGHT'S RETURN

HARK! hark! hark!
The lark sings high in the dark.
The were wolves mutter, the night hawks moan,
The raven croaks from the Raven-stone;
What care I for his boding groan,
Riding the moorland to come to mine own?
Hark! hark! hark!
The lark sings high in the dark.

Hark! hark! hark!
The lark sings high in the dark.
Long have I wander'd by land and by sea,
Long have I ridden by moorland and lea;
Yonder she sits with my babe on her knee,
Sits at the window and watches for me!
Hark! hark! hark!
The lark sings high in the dark.

WRITTEN FOR MUSIC.
1857.

PEN-Y-GWRYDD

TO TOM HUGHES, ESQ.

THERE is no inn in Snowdon which is not awful dear,
Excepting Pen-y-gwrydd (you can't pronounce it, dear),
Which standeth in the meeting of noble valleys three —
One is the vale of Gywnant, so well beloved by me,
One goes to Capel-Curig, and I can't mind its name,
And one it is Llanberris Pass, which all men knows the same;
Between which radiations vast mountains does arise,
As full of tarns as sieves of holes, in which big fish will rise,
That is, just one day in the year, if you be there, my boy,
Just about ten o'clock at night; and then I wish you joy.
Now to this Pen-y-gwrydd inn I purposeth to write,
(Axing the post town out of Froude, for I can't mind it quite),
And to engage a room or two, for let us say a week,
For fear of gents, and Manichees, and reading parties meek,
And there to live like fighting-cocks at almost a bob a day,

And arterwards toward the sea make tracks and cut away,
All for to catch the salmon bold in Aberglaslyn pool,
And work the flats in Traeth-Mawr, and will, or I'm a fool.
And that's my game, which, if you like, respond to me by post;
But I fear it will not last, my son, a thirteen days at most.
Flies is no object; I can tell some three or four will do,
And John Jones, Clerk, he knows the rest, and ties and sells 'em too.
Besides of which I have no more to say, leastwise just now,
And so, goes to my children's school and 'umbly makes my bow.

EVERSLEY, 1857.

ODE

ON THE INSTALLATION OF THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, 1862 [1]

HENCE a while, severer Muses;
Spare your slaves till drear October.
Hence; for Alma Mater chooses
Not to be for ever sober:
But, like stately matron gray,
Calling child and grandchild round her,
Will for them at least be gay;
Share for once their holiday;
And, knowing she will sleep the sounder,
Cheerier-hearted on the morrow
Rise to grapple care and sorrow,
Grandly leads the dance adown, and joins the children's play.
So go, for in your places
Already, as you see
(Her tears for some deep sorrow scarcely dried),
Venus holds court among her sinless graces,
With many a nymph from many a park and lea.
She, pensive, waits the merrier faces
Of those your wittier sisters three,

[1] This Ode was set to Professor Sterndale Bennet's music, and sung in the Senate House, Cambridge, on the Day of Installation.

O'er jest and dance and song who still preside,
To cheer her in this merry-mournful tide;
And bids us, as she smiles or sighs,
Tune our fancies by her eyes.

Then let the young be glad,
Fair girl and gallant lad,
And sun themselves to-day
By lawn and garden gay;
'T is play befits the noon
Of rosy-girdled June;
Who dare frown if heaven shall smile?
Blest, who can forget a while;
The world before them, and above
The light of universal love.
Go, then, let the young be gay;
From their heart as from their dress
Let darkness and let mourning pass away,
While we the staid and worn look on and bless.

Health to courage firm and high!
Health to Granta's chivalry!
Wisely finding, day by day,
Play in toil, and toil in play.
Granta greets them, gliding down
On by park and spire and town;
Humming mills and golden meadows,
Barred with elm and poplar shadows;
Giant groves, and learned halls;
Holy fanes and pictured walls.
Yet she bides not here; around
Lies the Muses' sacred ground.
Most she lingers, where below
Gliding wherries come and go;
Stalwart footsteps shake the shores;
Rolls the pulse of stalwart oars;

Rings aloft the exultant cry
For the bloodless victory.
There she greets the sports, which breed
Valiant lads for England's need;
Wisely finding, day by day,
Play in toil, and toil in play.
Health to courage, firm and high!
Health to Granta's chivalry!

Yet stay a while, severer Muses, stay,
For you, too, have your rightful parts to-day.
Known long to you, and known through you to fame,
Are Chatsworth's hall, and Cavendish's name.
You too, then, Alma Mater calls to greet
A worthy patron for your ancient seat;
And bid her sons from him example take,
Of learning purely sought for learning's sake,
Of worth unboastful, power in duty spent;
And see, fulfilled in him, her high intent.

Come, Euterpe, wake thy choir;
Fit thy notes to our desire.
Long may he sit the chiefest here,
Meet us and greet us, year by year;
Long inherit, sire and son,
All that their race has wrought and won,
Since that great Cavendish came again,
Round the world and over the main,
Breasting the Thames with his mariners bold,
Past good Queen Bess' palace of old;
With jewel and ingot packed in his hold,
And sails of damask and cloth of gold;
While never a sailor-boy on board
But was decked as brave as a Spanish lord,

With the spoils he had won
In the Isles of the Sun,
And the shores of fairy-land,
And yet held for the crown of the goodly show,
That queenly smile from the Palace window,
And that wave of a queenly hand.

Yes, let the young be gay,
And sun themselves to-day;—
And from their hearts, as from their dress,
Let mourning pass away,
But not from us, who watch our years fast fleeing.
And snatching as they flee, fresh fragments of our being.
Can we forget one friend,
Can we forget one face,
Which cheered us toward our end,
Which nerved us for our race?
Oh sad to toil, and yet forego
One presence which has made us know
To God-like-souls how deep our debt!
We would not, if we could, forget.

Severer Muses, linger yet;
Speak out for us one pure and rich regret.
Thou, Clio, who, with awful pen,
Gravest great names upon the hearts of men,
Speak of a fate beyond our ken;
A gem late found and lost too soon;[1]
A sun gone down at highest noon;
A tree from Odin's ancient root,
Which bore for men the ancient fruit,

[1] His royal Highness the Prince Consort, Chancellor of Cambridge University.

Counsel, and faith and scorn of wrong,
And cunning lore, and soothing song,
Snapt in mid-growth, and leaving unaware
The flock unsheltered and the pasture bare.
Nay, let us take what God shall send,
Trusting bounty without end.
God ever lives; and Nature,
Beneath His high dictature,
Hale and teeming, can replace
Strength by strength and grace, by grace,
Hope by hope, and friend by friend:
Trust; and take what God shall send.

So shall Alma Mater see
Daughters fair and wise
Train new lands of liberty
Under stranger skies;
Spreading round the teeming earth
English science, manhood, worth.

1862.

SONGS FROM "THE WATER-BABIES"

THE TIDE RIVER

CLEAR and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming wear;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl:
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the further I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The floodgates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,

As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

From "*The Water-Babies.*"
EVERSLEY, 1862.

YOUNG AND OLD

WHEN all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young.

From "*The Water-Babies.*"
1862.

THE SUMMER SEA

SOFT, soft wind, from out the sweet south sliding,
Waft thy silver cloud webs athwart the summer sea;
Thin thin threads of mist on dewy fingers twining
Weave a veil of dappled gauze to shade my babe and me.

Deep deep Love, within thine own abyss abiding,
Pour Thyself abroad, O Lord, on earth and air and sea;
Worn weary hearts within Thy holy temple hiding,
Shield from sorrow, sin, and shame my helpless babe and me.

From "*The Water-Babies*."
1862.

MY LITTLE DOLL

I ONCE had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled;
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
And I cried for more than a week, dears,
But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day:

Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
  For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
  And her hair not the least bit curled:
Yet for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
  The prettiest doll in the world.

From "*The Water-Babies.*"
EVERSLEY, 1862.

THE KNIGHT'S LEAP

A LEGEND OF ALTENAHR

"So the foemen have fired the gate, men of mine;
And the water is spent and gone?
Then bring me a cup of the red Ahr-wine:
I never shall drink but this one.

"And reach me my harness, and saddle my horse,
And lead him me round to the door:
He must take such a leap to-night perforce,
As horse never took before.

"I have fought my fight, I have lived my life,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trier to Coln there was never a knight
Led a merrier life than mine.

"I have lived by the saddle for years two score;
And if I must die on tree,
Then the old saddle tree, which has borne me of yore,
Is the properest timber for me.

"So now to show bishop, and burgher, and priest,
How the Altenahr hawk can die:
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He must take to his wings and fly."

He harnessed himself by the clear moonshine,
  And he mounted his horse at the door;
And he drained such a cup of the red Ahr-wine,
  As man never drained before.

He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
  And he leapt him out over the wall;
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
  Three hundred feet of fall.

They found him next morning below in the glen,
  With never a bone in him whole —
A mass or a prayer, now, good gentlemen,
  For such a bold rider's soul.

EVERSLEY, 1862.

THE SONG OF THE LITTLE BALTUNG

A.D. 395

A HARPER came over the Danube so wide,
And he came into Alaric's hall,
And he sang the song of the little Baltung
To him and his heroes all.

How the old old Balt and the young young Balt
Rode out of Caucaland,
With the royal elephant's trunk on helm
And the royal lance in hand.

Thuringer heroes, counts and knights,
Pricked proud in their meinie;
For they were away to the great Kaiser,
In Byzant beside the sea.

And when they came to the Danube so wide
They shouted from off the shore,
"Come over, come over, ye Roman slaves,
And ferry your masters o'er."

And when they came to Adrian's burgh,
With its towers so smooth and high,
"Come out, come out, ye Roman knaves,
And see your lords ride by."

But when they came to the long long walls
  That stretch from sea to sea,
That old old Balt let down his chin,
  And a thoughtful man grew he.

"Oh oft have I scoffed at brave Fridigern,
  But never will I scoff more,
If these be the walls which kept him out
  From the Micklegard there on the shore."

Then out there came the great Kaiser,
  With twice ten thousand men;
But never a Thuring was coward enough
  To wish himself home again.

"Bow down, thou rebel, old Athanarich,
  And beg thy life this day;
The Kaiser is lord of all the world,
  And who dare say him nay?"

"I never came out of Caucaland
  To beg for less nor more;
But to see the pride of the great Kaiser,
  In his Micklegard here by the shore.

"I never came out of Caucaland
  To bow to mortal wight,
But to shake the hand of the great Kaiser,
  And God defend my right."

He shook his hand, that cunning Kaiser,
  And he kissed him courteouslie,
And he has ridden with Athanarich
  That wonder-town to see.

He showed him his walls of marble white —
  A mile o'erhead they shone;
Quoth the Balt, "Who would leap into that garden,
  King Siegfried's boots must own."

He showed him his engines of arsmetrick
  And his wells of quenchless flame,
And his flying rocks, that guarded his walls
  From all that against him came.

He showed him his temples and pillared halls,
  And his streets of houses high;
And his watch-towers tall, where his star-gazers
  Sit reading the signs of the sky.

He showed him his ships with their hundred oars,
  And their sides like a castle wall,
That fetch home the plunder of all the world,
  At the Kaiser's beck and call.

He showed him all nations of every tongue
  That are bred beneath the sun,
How they flowed together in Micklegard street
  As the brooks flow all into one.

He showed him the shops of the china ware,
  And of silk and sendal also,
And he showed him the baths and the waterpipes
  On arches aloft that go.

He showed him ostrich and unicorn,
  Ape, lion, and tiger keen;
And elephants wise roared "Hail Kaiser!"
  As though they had Christians been.

He showed him the hoards of the dragons and trolls,
Rare jewels and heaps of gold—
"Hast thou seen, in all thy hundred years,
Such as these, thou king so old?"

Now that cunning Kaiser was a scholar wise,
And could of gramarye,
And he cast a spell on that old old Balt,
Till lowly and meek spake he.

"Oh oft have I heard of the Micklegard,
What I held for chapmen's lies;
But now do I know of the Micklegard,
By the sight of mine own eyes.

"Woden in Valhalla,
But thou on earth art God;
And he that dare withstand thee, Kaiser,
On his own head lies his blood."

Then out and spake that little Baltung,
Rode at the king's right knee,
Quoth "Fridigern slew false Kaiser Valens,
And he died like you or me."

"And who art thou, thou pretty bold boy,
Rides at the king's right knee?"
"Oh I am the Baltung, boy Alaric,
And as good a man as thee."

"As good as me, thou pretty bold boy,
With down upon thy chin?"
"Oh a spae-wife laid a doom on me,
The best of thy realm to win."

"If thou be so fierce, thou little wolf cub,
  Or ever thy teeth be grown;
Then I must guard my two young sons
  Lest they should lose their own."

"Oh, it's I will guard your two lither lads,
  In their burgh beside the sea,
And it's I will prove true man to them
  If they will prove true to me.

"But it's you must warn your two lither lads,
  And warn them bitterly,
That if I shall find them two false Kaisers,
  High hanged they both shall be."

Now they are gone into the Kaiser's palace
  To eat the peacock fine,
And they are gone into the Kaiser's palace
  To drink the good Greek wine.

The Kaiser alone, and the old old Balt,
  They sat at the cedar board;
And round them served on the bended knee
  Full many a Roman lord.

"What ails thee, what ails thee, friend Athanarich?
  What makes thee look so pale?"
"I fear I am poisoned, thou cunning Kaiser,
  For I feel my heart-strings fail.

"Oh would I had kept that great great oath
  I swore by the horse's head,
I would never set foot on Roman ground
  Till the day that I lay dead.

"Oh would I were home in Caucaland,
  To hear my harpers play,
And to drink my last of the nut-brown ale,
  While I gave the gold rings away.

"Oh would I were home in Caucaland,
  To hear the Gothmen's horn,
And watch the waggons, and brown brood mares
  And the tents where I was born.

"But now I must die between four stone walls
  In Byzant beside the sea:
And as thou shalt deal with my little Baltung,
  So God shall deal with thee."

The Kaiser he purged himself with oaths,
  And he buried him royally,
And he set on his barrow an idol of gold,
  Where all Romans must bow the knee.

And now the Goths are the Kaiser's men,
  And guard him with lance and sword,
And the little Baltung is his sworn son-at-arms,
  And eats at the Kaiser's board.

And the Kaiser's two sons are two false white lads
  That a clerk may beat with cane.
The clerk that should beat that little Baltung
  Would never sing mass again.

Oh the gates of Rome they are steel without,
  And beaten gold within:
But they shall fly wide to the little Baltung
  With the down upon his chin.

Oh the fairest flower in the Kaiser's garden
  Is Rome and Italian land:
But it all shall fall to the little Baltung
  When he shall take lance in hand.

And when he is parting the plunder of Rome,
  He shall pay for this song of mine,
Neither maiden nor land, neither jewel nor gold,
  But one cup of Italian wine.

EVERSLEY, 1862.

ON THE DEATH OF LEOPOLD, KING OF THE BELGIANS[1]

A KING is dead! Another master mind
  Is summoned from the world-wide council hall.
Ah, for some seer, to say what lurks behind —
  To read the mystic writing on the wall!

Be still, fond man: nor ask thy fate to know.
  Face bravely what each God-sent moment brings.
Above thee rules in love, through weal and woe,
  Guiding thy kings and thee, the King of kings.

WINDSOR CASTLE,
November 10, 1865.

[1] Impromptu lines written in the album of the Crown Princess of Germany.

MARTIN LIGHTFOOT'S SONG[1]

COME harken, harken, gentles all,
  Come harken unto me,
And I'll sing you a song of a Wood-Lyon
  Came swimming out over the sea.

He rangèd west, he rangèd east,
  And far and wide ranged he;
He took his bite out of every beast
  Lives under the greenwood tree.

Then by there came a silly old wolf,
  "And I'll serve you," quoth he;
Quoth the Lyon, "My paw is heavy enough,
  So what wilt thou do for me?"

Then by there came a cunning old fox,
  "And I'll serve you," quoth he;
Quoth the Lyon, "My wits are sharp enough,
  So what wilt thou do for me?"

Then by there came a white, white dove,
  Flew off Our Lady's knee;
Sang "It's I will be your true, true love,
  If you'll be true to me."

[1] Supposed to be sung at Crowland Minster to Leofric, the Wake's Mass Priest, when news was received of Hereward's second marriage to Alftruda.

"And what will you do, you bonny white dove?
And what will you do for me?"
"Oh, it's I'll bring you to Our Lady's love,
In the ways of chivalrie."

He followed the dove that Wood-Lyon
By mere and wood and wold,
Till he is come to a perfect knight,
Like the Paladin of old.

He rangèd east, he rangèd west,
And far and wide ranged he—
And ever the dove won him honor and fame
In the ways of chivalrie.

Then by there came a foul old sow,
Came rookling under the tree;
And "It's I will be true love to you,
If you'll be true to me."

"And what wilt thou do, thou foul old sow?
And what wilt thou do for me?"
"Oh, there hangs in my snout a jewel of gold,
And that will I give to thee."

He took to the sow that Wood-Lyon;
To the rookling sow took he;
And the dove flew up to Our Lady's bosom;
And never again throve he.

From "*Hereward the Wake.*"
1866.

EASTER WEEK

(WRITTEN FOR MUSIC TO BE SUNG AT A PARISH INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION)

SEE the land, her Easter keeping,
  Rises as her Maker rose.
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,
  Burst at last from winter snows.
Earth with heaven above rejoices;
  Fields and gardens hail the spring;
Shaughs and woodlands ring with voices,
  While the wild birds build and sing.

You, to whom your Maker granted
  Powers to those sweet birds unknown,
Use the craft by God implanted;
  Use the reason not your own.
Here, while heaven and earth rejoices,
  Each his Easter tribute bring —
Work of fingers, chant of voices,
  Like the birds who build and sing.

EVERSLEY, 1867.

DRIFTING AWAY

A FRAGMENT

THEY drift away. Ah, God! they drift for ever.
I watch the stream sweep onward to the sea,
Like some old battered buoy upon a roaring river,
Round whom the tide-waifs hang — then drift to
sea.

I watch them drift — the old familiar faces,
Who fished and rode with me, by stream and wold,
Till ghosts, not men, fill old beloved places,
And, ah! the land is rank with churchyard mould.

I watch them drift — the youthful aspirations,
Shores, landmarks, beacons, drift alike.

. . . . . .

I watch them drift — the poets and the statesmen;
The very streams run upward from the sea.

. . . . . .

Yet overhead the boundless arch of heaven
Still fades to night, still blazes into day.

. . . . . .

Ah, God! My God! Thou wilt not drift away!

November, 1867.

CHRISTMAS DAY

How will it dawn, the coming Christmas Day?
A northern Christmas, such as painters love,
And kinsfolk shaking hands but once a year,
And dames who tell old legends by the fire?
Red sun, blue sky, white snow, and pearled ice,
Keen ringing air, which sets the blood on fire,
And makes the old man merry with the young,
Through the short sunshine, through the longer night?
Or southern Christmas, dark and dank with mist
And heavy with the scent of steaming leaves,
And rosebuds mouldering on the dripping porch;
One twilight, without rise or set of sun,
Till beetles drone along the hollow lane,
And round the leafless hawthorns, flitting bats
Hawk the pale moths of winter? Welcome then
At best, the flying gleam, the flying shower,
The rain-pools glittering on the long white roads,
And shadows sweeping on from down to down
Before the salt Atlantic gale: yet come
In whatsoever garb, or gay, or sad,
Come fair, come foul, 't will still be Christmas Day.
How will it dawn, the coming Christmas Day?
To sailors lounging on the lonely deck
Beneath the rushing trade-wind? Or to him,
Who by some noisome harbor of the East,
Watches swart arms roll down the precious bales,

Spoils of the tropic forests; year by year
Amid the din of heathen voices, groaning
Himself half heathen? How to those — brave hearts!
Who toil with laden loins and sinking stride
Beside the bitter wells of treeless sands
Toward the peaks which flood the ancient Nile,
To free a tyrant's captives? How to those —
New patriarchs of the new-found underworld —
Who stand, like Jacob, on the virgin lawns,
And count their flocks' increase? To them that day
Shall dawn in glory, and solstitial blaze
Of full midsummer sun: to them that morn,
Gay flowers beneath their feet, gay birds aloft,
Shall tell of nought but summer: but to them,
Ere yet, unwarned by carol or by chime,
They spring into the saddle, thrills may come
From that great heart of Christendom which beats
Round all the worlds; and gracious thoughts of youth;
Of steadfast folk, who worship God at home;
Of wise words, learnt beside their mothers' knee;
Of innocent faces upturned once again
In awe and joy to listen to the tale
Of God made man, and in a manger laid —
May soften, purify, and raise the soul
From selfish cares, and growing lust of gain,
And phantoms of this dream which some call life,
Toward the eternal facts; for here or there,
Summer or winter, 't will be Christmas Day.

Blest day, which aye reminds us, year by year,
What 't is to be a man: to curb and spurn
The tyrant in us; that ignobler self

Which boasts, not loathes, its likeness to the brute,
And owns no good save ease, no ill save pain,
No purpose, save its share in that wild war
In which, through countless ages, living things
Compete in internecine greed. — Ah God!
Are we as creeping things, which have no Lord?
That we are brutes, great God, we know too well:
Apes daintier-featured; silly birds who flaunt
Their plumes unheeding of the fowler's step;
Spiders, who catch with paper, not with webs;
Tigers, who slay with cannon and sharp steel,
Instead of teeth and claws; — all these we are.
Are we no more than these, save in degree?
No more than these; and born but to compete —
To envy and devour, like beast or herb;
Mere fools of nature; puppets of strong lusts,
Taking the sword, to perish with the sword
Upon the universal battle-field,
Even as the things upon the moor outside?
  The heath eats up green grass and delicate flowers,
The pine eats up the heath, the grub the pine,
The finch the grub, the hawk the silly finch;
And man, the mightiest of all beasts of prey,
Eats what he lists; the strong eat up the weak,
The many eat the few; great nations, small;
And he who cometh in the name of all —
He, greediest, triumphs by the greed of all;
And, armed by his own victims, eats up all:
While ever out of the eternal heavens
Looks patient down the great magnanimous God,
Who, Maker of all worlds, did sacrifice
All to Himself? Nay, but Himself to one;
Who taught mankind on that first Christmas Day,
What 't was to be a man; to give, not take;

To serve, not rule; to nourish, not devour;
To help, not crush; if need, to die, not live.
  Oh blessed day, which givest the eternal lie
To self, and sense, and all the brute within;
Oh, come to us, amid this war of life;
To hall and hovel, come; to all who toil
In senate, shop, or study; and to those
Who, sundered by the wastes of half a world,
Ill-warned, and sorely tempted, ever face
Nature's brute powers, and men unmanned to brutes —
Come to them, blest and blessing, Christmas Day.
Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem;
The kneeling shepherds, and the Babe Divine:
And keep them men indeed, fair Christmas Day.

EVERSLEY, 1868.

September 21, 1870[1]

Speak low, speak little: who may sing
  While yonder cannon-thunders boom?
Watch, shuddering, what each day may bring:
  Nor "pipe amid the crack of doom."

And yet — the pines sing overhead,
  The robins by the alder-pool,
The bees about the garden-bed,
  The children dancing home from school.

And ever at the loom of Birth
  The mighty Mother weaves and sings:
She weaves — fresh robes for mangled earth;
  She sings — fresh hopes for desperate things.

And thou, too: if through Nature's calm
  Some strain of music touch thine ears,
Accept and share that soothing balm,
  And sing, though choked with pitying tears.

Eversley, 1870.

[1] Time of the Franco-Prussian War.

THE MANGO-TREE

He wiled me through the furzy croft;
  He wiled me down the sandy lane.
He told his boy's love, soft and oft,
  Until I told him mine again.

We married, and we sailed the main;
  A soldier, and a soldier's wife.
We marched through many a burning plain;
  We sighed for many a gallant life.

But his — God kept it safe from harm.
  He toiled, and dared, and earned command;
And those three stripes upon his arm
  Were more to me than gold or land.

Sure he would win some great renown:
  Our lives were strong, our hearts were high.
One night the fever struck him down.
  I sat, and stared, and saw him die.

I had his children — one, two, three.
  One week I had them, blithe and sound.
The next — beneath this mango-tree,
  By him in barrack burying-ground.

I sit beneath the mango-shade;
  I live my five years' life all o'er —
Round yonder stems his children played;
  He mounted guard at yonder door.

'T is I, not they, am gone and dead.
  They live; they know; they feel; they see.
Their spirits light the golden shade
  Beneath the giant mango-tree.

All things, save I, are full of life:
  The minas, pluming velvet breasts;
The monkeys, in their foolish strife;
  The swooping hawks, the swinging nests;

The lizards basking on the soil,
  The butterflies who sun their wings;
The bees about their household toil,
  They live, they love, the blissful things.

Each tender purple mango-shoot,
  That folds and droops so bashful down;
It lives; it sucks some hidden root;
  It rears at last a broad green crown.

It blossoms; and the children cry —
  "Watch when the mango-apples fall."
It lives: but rootless, fruitless, I —
  I breathe and dream; — and that is all.

Thus am I dead: yet cannot die:
  But still within my foolish brain
There hangs a pale blue evening sky;
  A furzy croft; a sandy lane.

1870.

THE PRIEST'S HEART

It was Sir John, the fair young Priest,
  He strode up off the strand;
But seven fisher maidens he left behind
  All dancing hand in hand.

He came unto the wise wife's house:
  "Now, Mother, to prove your art;
To charm May Carleton's merry blue eyes
  Out of a young man's heart."

"My son, you went for a holy man,
  Whose heart was set on high;
Go sing in your psalter, and read in your books;
  Man's love fleets lightly by."

"I had liever to talk with May Carleton,
  Than with all the saints in Heaven;
I had liever to sit by May Carleton
  Than climb the spheres seven.

"I have watched and fasted, early and late,
  I have prayed to all above;
But I find no cure save churchyard mould,
  For the pain which men call love."

"Now Heaven forefend that ill grow worse:
  Enough that ill be ill.
I know of a spell to draw May Carleton,
  And bend her to your will."

"If thou didst that which thou canst not do,
  Wise woman though thou be,
I would run and run till I buried myself
  In the surge of yonder sea.

"Scathless for me are maid and wife,
  And scathless shall they bide.
Yet charm me May Carleton's eyes from the heart
  That aches in my left side."

She charmed him with the white witchcraft,
  She charmed him with the black,
But he turned his fair young face to the wall,
  Till she heard his heart-strings crack.

1870.

"QU'EST-CE QU'IL DIT"[1]

ESPION ailé de la jeune amante
De l'ombre des palmiers pourquoi ce cri?
Laisse en paix le beau garçon plaider et vaincre —
Pourquoi, pourquoi demander "Qu'est-ce qu'il
dit?"

"Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?" Ce que tu dis toi-même
Chaque mois de ce printemps éternel;
Ce que disent les papillons qui s'entre-baisent,
Ce que dit tout beau jeune être à toute belle.

Importun! Attende quelques lustres:
Quand les souvenirs l'emmeneront ici —
Mère, grand'mère, pâle, lasse, et fidèle,
Demande mais doucement — "Et le vieillard,
Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?"

TRINIDAD, *January* 10, 1870.

[1] The Qu'est-ce qu'il dit is a Tropical bird.

THE LEGEND OF LA BREA[1]

DOWN beside the loathly Pitch Lake,
  In the stately Morichal,[2]
Sat an ancient Spanish Indian,
  Peering through the columns tall.

Watching vainly for the flashing
  Of the jewelled colibris;[3]
Listening vainly for their humming
  Round the honey-blossomed trees.

"Few," he sighed, "they come, and fewer,
  To the cocorité[4] bowers;
Murdered, madly, through the forests
  Which of yore were theirs — and ours."

By there came a negro hunter,
  Lithe and lusty, sleek and strong,
Rolling round his sparkling eyeballs,
  As he loped and lounged along.

[1] This myth about the famous Pitch Lake of Trinidad was told almost word for word to a M. Joseph by an aged half-caste Indian who went by the name of Señor Trinidada. The manners and customs which the ballad describes, and the cruel and dangerous destruction of the beautiful birds of Trinidad, are facts which may be easily verified by any one who will take the trouble to visit the West Indies.

[2] A magnificent wood of the Mauritia Fanpalm, on the south shore of the Pitch Lake.

[3] Humming-birds.

[4] Maximiliana palms.

Rusty firelock on his shoulder;
  Rusty cutlass on his thigh;
Never jollier British subject
  Rollicked underneath the sky.

British law to give him safety,
  British fleets to guard his shore,
And a square of British freehold —
  He had all we have, and more.

Fattening through the endless summer,
  Like his own provision ground,
He had reached the summum bonum
  Which our latest wits have found.

So he thought; and in his hammock
  Gnawed his junk of sugar-cane,
Toasted plantains at the fire-stick,
  Gnawed, and dozed, and gnawed again.

Had a wife in his ajoupa[1] —
  Or, at least, what did instead;
Children, too, who died so early,
  He 'd no need to earn their bread.

Never stole, save what he needed,
  From the Crown woods round about;
Never lied, except when summoned —
  Let the warden find him out.

Never drank, except at market;
  Never beat his sturdy mate;
She could hit as hard as he could,
  And had just as hard a pate.

[1] Hut of timber and palm-leaves.

Had no care for priest nor parson,
  Hope of heaven nor fear of hell;
And in all his views of nature
  Held with Comte and Peter Bell.

Healthy, happy, silly, kindly,
  Neither care nor toil had he,
Save to work an hour at sunrise,
  And then hunt the colibri.

Not a bad man; not a good man:
  Scarce a man at all, one fears,
If the Man be that within us
  Which is born of fire and tears.

Round the palm-stems, round the creepers,
  Flashed a feathered jewel past,
Ruby-crested, topaz-throated,
  Plucked the cocorité bast,

Plucked the fallen ceiba-cotton,[1]
  Whirred away to build his nest,
Hung at last, with happy humming,
  Round some flower he fancied best.

Up then went the rusty muzzle,
  "Dat de tenth I shot to-day:"
But out sprang the Indian shouting,
  Balked the negro of his prey.

"Eh, you Señor Trinidada!
  What dis new ondacent plan?
Spoil a genl'man's chance ob shooting?
  I as good as any man.

[1] From the Eriodendron, or giant silk-cotton.

"Dese not your woods; dese de Queen's woods:
You seem not know whar you ar,
Gibbin' yuself dese buckra airs here,
You black Indian Papist! Dar!"

Stately, courteous, stood the Indian;
Pointed through the palm-tree shade:
"Does the gentleman of color
Know how yon Pitch Lake was made?"

Grinned the negro, grinned and trembled —
Through his nerves a shudder ran —
Saw a snake-like eye that held him;
Saw he 'd met an Obeah man.

Saw a fêtish — such a bottle —
Buried at his cottage door;
Toad and spider, dirty water,
Rusty nails, and nine charms more.

Saw in vision such a cock's head
In the path — and it was white!
Saw Brinvilliers[1] in his pottage:
Faltered, cold and damp with fright.

Fearful is the chance of poison:
Fearful, too, the great unknown:
Magic brings some positivists
Humbly on their marrow-bone.

Like the wedding-guest enchanted,
There he stood, a trembling cur;
While the Indian told his story,
Like the Ancient Mariner.

[1] Spigelia anthelmia, a too well-known poison-plant.

Told how — "Once that loathly Pitch Lake
  Was a garden bright and fair;
How the Chaymas off the mainland
  Built their palm ajoupas there.

"How they throve, and how they fattened,
  Hale and happy, safe and strong;
Passed the livelong days in feasting;
  Passed the nights in dance and song.

"Till they cruel grew, and wanton:
  Till they killed the colibris.
Then outspoke the great Good Spirit,
  Who can see through all the trees.

"Said — 'And what have I not sent you,
  Wanton Chaymas, many a year?
Lapp,[1] agouti,[2] cachicame,[3]
  Quenc[4] and guazu-pita deer.

"'Fish I sent you, sent you turtle,
  Chip-chip,[5] conch, flamingo red,
Woodland paui,[6] horned screamer,[7]
  And blue ramier[8] overhead.

"'Plums from balata[9] and mombin,[10]
  Tania,[11] manioc,[12] water-vine;[13]
Let you fell my slim manacques,[14]
  Tap my sweet morichè wine.[15]

[1] Cœlogenys Paca. [2] Wild cavy. [3] Armadillo.
[4] Peccary hog. [5] Trigonia. [6] Penelope.
[7] Palamedea. [8] Dove. [9] Mimusops.
[10] Spondias. [11] An esculent Arum.
[12] Jatropha manihot, "Cassava." [13] Vitis Caribæa.
[14] Euterpe, "mountain cabbage" palm. [15] Mauritia palm.

"'Sent rich plantains,[1] food of angels;
Rich ananas,[2] food of kings;
Grudged you none of all my treasures:
Save these lovely useless things.'

"But the Chaymas' ears were deafened;
Blind their eyes, and could not see
How a blissful Indian's spirit
Lived in every colibri.

"Lived, forgetting toil and sorrow,
Ever fair and ever new;
Whirring round the dear old woodland,
Feeding on the honey-dew.

"Till one evening roared the earthquake:
Monkeys howled, and parrots screamed:
And the Guaraons at morning
Gathered here, as men who dreamed.

"Sunk were gardens, sunk ajoupas;
Hut and hammock, man and hound:
And above the Chayma village
Boiled with pitch the cursed ground.

"Full, and too full; safe and too safe;
Negro man, take care, take care.
He that wantons with God's bounties
Of God's wrath had best beware.

"For the saucy, reckless, heartless,
Evil days are sure in store.
You may see the negro sinking
As the Chayma sank of yore."

[1] Musa. [2] Pine-apple.

Loudly laughed that stalwart hunter —
"Eh, what superstitious talk!
Nyam[1] am nyam, an' maney maney;
Birds am birds, like park am park;
An' dere 's twenty thousand birdskins
Ardered jes' now fram New Yark."

EVERSLEY, 1870.

[1] Food.

HYMN[1]

ACCEPT this building, gracious Lord,
  No temple though it be;
We raised it for our suffering kin,
  And so, Good Lord, for Thee.

Accept our little gift, and give
  To all who here may dwell,
The will and power to do their work,
  Or bear their sorrows well.

From Thee all skill and science flow;
  All pity, care, and love,
All calm and courage, faith and hope,
  Oh! pour them from above.

And part them, Lord, to each and all,
  As each and all shall need,
To rise like incense, each to Thee,
  In noble thought and deed.

And hasten, Lord, that perfect day,
  When pain and death shall cease;
And Thy just rule shall fill the earth,
  With health, and light, and peace.

[1] Sung by 1000 School Children at the opening of the New Wing of the Children's Hospital, Birmingham.

When ever blue the sky shall gleam,
  And ever green the sod;
And man's rude work deface no more,
  The Paradise of God.

EVERSLEY, 1871.

THE DELECTABLE DAY

THE boy on the famous gray pony,
  Just bidding good-bye at the door,
Plucking up maiden heart for the fences
  Where his brother won honor of yore.

The walk to "the Meet" with fair children,
  And women as gentle as gay, —
Ah! how do we male hogs in armor
  Deserve such companions as they?

The afternoon's wander to windward,
  To meet the dear boy coming back;
And to catch, down the turns of the valley,
  The last weary chime of the pack.

The climb homeward by park and by moorland,
  And through the fir forests again,
While the south-west wind roars in the gloaming,
  Like an ocean of seething champagne.

And at night the septette of Beethoven,
  And the grandmother by in her chair,
And the foot of all feet on the sofa
  Beating delicate time to the air.

Ah, God! a poor soul can but thank Thee
  For such a delectable day!
Though the fury, the fool, and the swindler,
  To-morrow again have their way!

EVERSLEY, *6th November*, 1872.

JUVENTUS MUNDI

LIST a tale a fairy sent us
Fresh from dear Mundi Juventus.
When Love and all the world was young,
And birds conversed as well as sung;
And men still faced this fair creation
With humor, heart, imagination.
Who come hither from Morocco
Every spring on the sirocco?
In russet she, and he in yellow,
Singing ever clear and mellow,
"Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet you, sweet you,
Did he beat you? Did he beat you?"
Phyllopneustes wise folk call them,
But don't know what did befall them,
Why they ever thought of coming
All that way to hear gnats humming,
Why they built not nests but houses,
Like the bumble-bees and mousies.
Nor how little birds got wings,
Nor what 't is the small cock sings —
How should they know — stupid fogies?
They dare n't even believe in bogies.
Once they were a girl and boy,
Each the other's life and joy.
He a Daphnis, she a Chloe,
Only they were brown, not snowy,
Till an Arab found them playing

Far beyond the Atlas straying,
Tied the helpless things together,
Drove them in the burning weather,
In his slave-gang many a league,
Till they dropped from wild fatigue.
Up he caught his whip of hide,
Lashed each soft brown back and side
Till their little brains were burst
With sharp pain, and heat, and thirst.
Over her the poor boy lay,
Tried to keep the blows away,
Till they stiffened into clay,
And the ruffian rode away:
Swooping o'er the tainted ground,
Carrion vultures gathered round,
And the gaunt hyenas ran
Tracking up the caravan.
But — ah, wonder! that was gone
Which they meant to feast upon.
And, for each, a yellow wren,
One a cock, and one a hen,
Sweetly warbling, flitted forth
O'er the desert toward the north.
But a shade of bygone sorrow,
Like a dream upon the morrow,
Round his tiny brainlet clinging,
Sets the wee cock ever singing,
"Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet you, sweet you,
Did he beat you? Did he beat you?"
Vultures croaked, and hopped and flopped,
But their evening meal was stopped.
And the gaunt hyenas foul
Sat down on their tails to howl.
Northward towards the cool spring weather,
Those two wrens fled on together,

On to England o'er the sea,
Where all folks alike are free.
There they built a cabin, wattled
Like the huts where first they prattled,
Hatched and fed, as safe as may be,
Many a tiny feathered baby.
But in autumn south they go
Past the Straits and Atlas' snow,
Over desert, over mountain,
To the palms beside the fountain,
Where, when once they lived before, he
Told her first the old, old story.
"What do the doves say? Curuck-Coo,
You love me and I love you."

1872.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Oh! I wish I were a tiny browny bird from out the south
Settled among the alder-holts, and twittering by the stream;
I would put my tiny tail down, and put up my tiny mouth,
And sing my tiny life away in one melodious dream.

I would sing about the blossoms, and the sunshine and the sky,
And the tiny wife I mean to have in such a cozy nest;
And if some one came and shot me dead, why then I could but die,
With my tiny life and tiny song just ended at their best.

Eversley, 1873.

BALLAD[1]

LORRAINE, LORRAINE, LORRÈE

1.

"ARE you ready for your steeple-chase, Lorraine,
Lorraine, Lorrèe?
Barum, Barum, Barum, Barum, Barum,
Barum, Baree.
You 're booked to ride your capping race to-day
at Coulterlee,
You 're booked to ride Vindictive, for all the world
to see,
To keep him straight, and keep him first, and win
the run for me.
Barum, Barum," etc.

2.

She clasped her new-born baby, poor Lorraine,
Lorraine, Lorrèe,
"I cannot ride Vindictive, as any man might see,
And I will not ride Vindictive with this baby on
my knee;
He 's killed a boy, he 's killed a man, and why must
he kill me?"

[1] Last poem. Written in illness, in the Rocky Mountains.

3.

"Unless you ride Vindictive, Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe,
Unless you ride Vindictive to-day at Coulterlee,
And land him safe across the brook, and win the blank for me,
It's you may keep your baby, for you'll get no keep from me."

4.

"That husbands could be cruel," said Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe,
"That husbands could be cruel, I have known for seasons three;
But oh! to ride Vindictive while a baby cries for me,
And be killed across a fence at last for all the world to see!"

5.

She mastered young Vindictive — Oh! the gallant lass was she,
And kept him straight and won the race as near as near could be;
But he killed her at the brook against a pollard willow tree,
Oh! he killed her at the brook, the brute, for all the world to see,
And no one but the baby cried for poor Lorraine, Lorrèe.

COLORADO, U. S. A.
June, 1874.